SENIOR BRUTALLY ATTACKED
85-year-old woman punched, dragged from her home
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Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2016

High 0°C/Low -4°C Snow

GIFT IDEA
These overlooked books are worth a read
metroLIFE

Grade 12 students Jonathan Chen and Caitlin Gilchrist in front of the large cauldron outside city hall.
HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

BRING ON 2017

New Year's cauldron lighting kicks off Canada's 150th

metroNEWS

Street-check exception now upsetting all sides

PROVINCIAL REGULATIONS

Both police union, criminal-defence lawyers slam policy

Dylan C. Robertson
For Metro | Ottawa

Looming provincial regulations on police street checks are drawing criticism from both frontline Ottawa officers and criminal-defence lawyers.

As of Jan. 1, police will no longer be able to approach people who aren't criminal suspects without first stating all conversations are voluntary, and that the person will get a receipt if their information goes into a database.

It replaces a system where police could approach anybody and log their name, location and activities into a database, used to link suspects to gang activity, a system that saw a disproportionate amount of minorities stopped.

The new "regulated interactions" system, which gives people an explicit choice to not speak to police, includes a large exception. "The regulations do not apply if the officer has reasonable or probable grounds that a crime has been committed, or will be committed," said the project's Ottawa lead, Insp. Mark Patterson.

Ottawa's police union says officers will probably now only approach suspects, instead of proactively asking neighbours, because the latter requires the disclaimer opening police to complaints.

Matt Skof, president of the Ottawa Police Association, believes this will further entrench distrust of the police, because officers will only approach people they deem suspicious. "The entire province is going to be negatively impacted," Skof said, by "a very unsafe environment."

Skof added the changes have "emboldened" gang members and people involved in criminal activity.

Defence lawyer Leo Russomanno also criticized the exemption, saying it's too broad. "The police are obviously going to try and pigeonhole whatever they're doing into that exception," he said.

"The government got all this fanfare for so-called 'banning carding' and that's just completely false."

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Mark Zuckerberg unveils artificial intelligence assistant named Jarvis, voiced by Morgan Freeman.

5 GREAT GIFT IDEAS FROM GOVERNMENT SURPLUS

Think you're bad at buying gifts? For a simple solution you could turn to federal departments who regularly auction off their surplus purchases. While these items are currently all owned by Her Majesty the Queen, they can be yours with some easy online bidding at gcsurplus.ca. DYLAN C. ROBERTSON FOR METRO

ALL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

1 34 office chairs

A set of 22 rotary chairs and 12 "guest chairs" range from tasteful pink cushions on black frames, to a mesh rolling chair with a cushy headrest.

2 Samsung Galaxy S5 Active

Though this smartphone "does not include a charging cable or any other accessories," its starting bid rivals anything you'll see on eBay. The phone is locked to Bell and includes a belt clip.

3 Assorted Scientific Equipment

This set of high-tech audio equipment includes a "Beyerdynamic UHF Diversity Receiver," and one "Brüel & Kjær Microphone Preamplifier 0.25" For the assorted scientist in your life.

4 'One Pear-Shaped Diamond'

This one-carat diamond has a "medium fancy yellow" colour , spanning 7.61 mm. GCSurplus also offers a set of eight, 2.41-carat diamonds for $2,900 (not including shipping).

5 CPR Resuscitation Annie Doll

Certified by St John's Ambulance, this CPR training doll has springs and valves that measure chest compressions and ventilation. Named "Annie," the doll comes with a blue sweater, wispy blond curls and a wooden casket.

CITY NEWS

Man faces nearly two dozen child porn, sexual-assault charges

A 36-year-old Ottawa man is scheduled to appear in court on Wednesday to face 23 charges, including 10 based on child pornography allegations.

Following a search at a residence on Tuesday, David Sharpe was charged with six counts of making child pornography, three counts of possessing child porn and a single count of distributing child porn.

He was also charged with two counts of sexual assault, two counts of sexual interference and nine counts of voyeurism. Police say additional charges are pending as the investigation continues.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lebreton Flats stabbing prompts attempted murder charge

A young Ottawa man is accused of attempted murder after another man was stabbed in a Lebreton Flats home.

A 911 call brought police to the 700 block of Albert Street around 8:20 a.m. Tuesday, and found a man in his 20s who had been stabbed in the arm. His injuries were not life-threatening.

Ottawa resident Christopher Campbell, 29, faces seven charges, including aggravated assault, theft under $5,000 and forcible confinement. METRO

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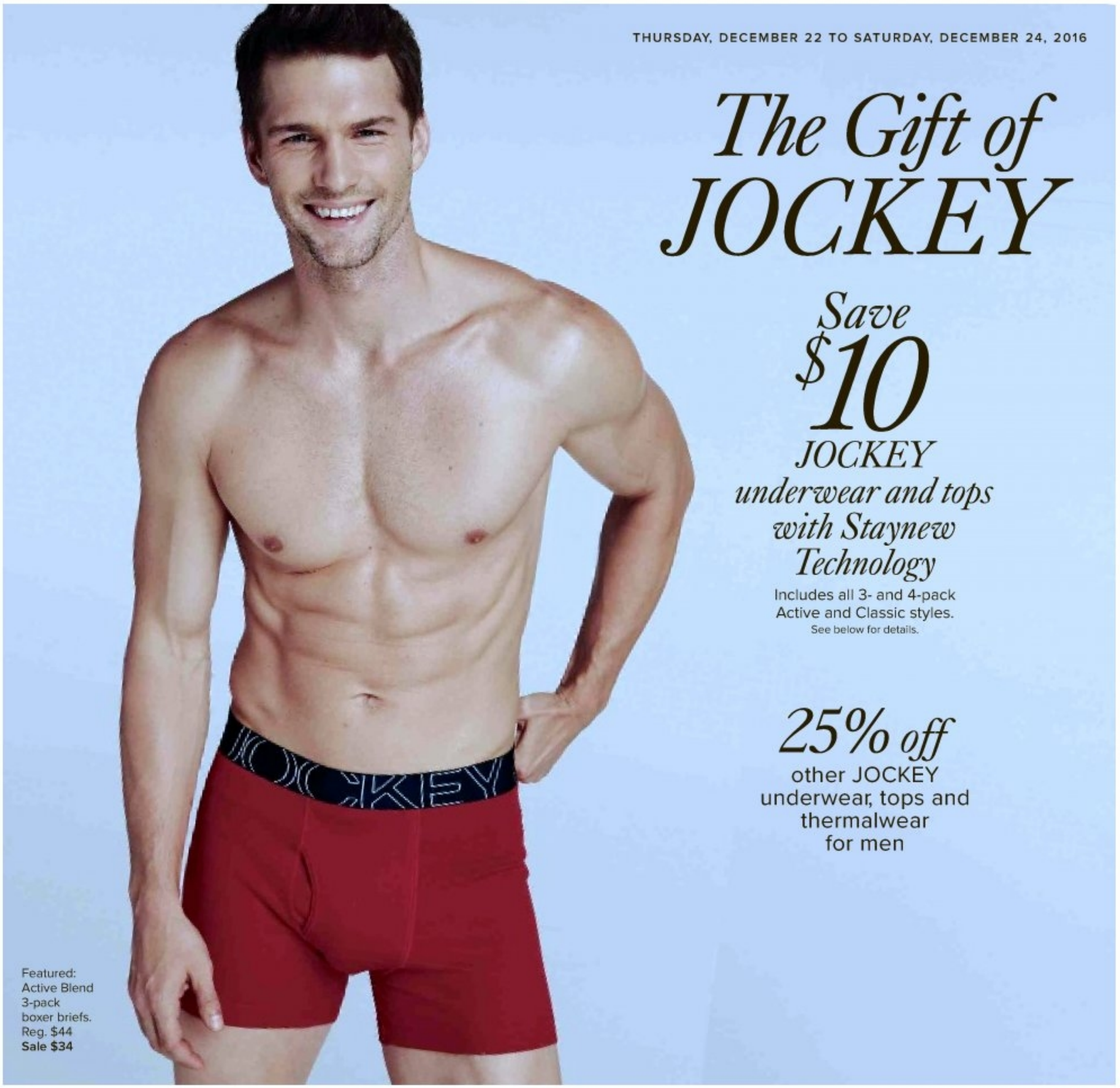

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Cheaper Internet coming to community housing

ONLINE ACCESS

Deal will help 32,000 tenants, organization's head says

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

Ottawa Community Housing has reached a deal with a local internet provider that will provide unlimited Internet for tenants at a cost of $25 per month.

Stéphane Giguère, CEO of Ottawa Community Housing (OCH), said the arrangement has been in development for over a year and will help the organization's 32,000 tenants working with a tight budget.

"For all Internet users, we see rates going up as we speak," he said.

"For our tenants, the rates are going down. It's very positive for them. People are using the Internet more and more for communication and education, but also for employment — people go on the internet to find a job," he said.

Giguère said that access is also crucial for the more than 6,000 youth living in OCH properties who need to do their homework or communicate with friends. The new package is a partnership with not-for-profit National Capital FreeNet.

The deal, available to OCH tenants starting Jan. 3, offers speeds of up to 6 Mbps and unlimited usage.

It will cost $25 per month for those with a telephone landline, or $30 per month for those without.

Like most other Internet providers, the company also requires a modem purchase and an installation fee if a land line doesn't already exist.

Community housing believes the package will be important to all their tenants, but especially for children. ISTOCK

Giguère said it was important that they reach an agreement for unlimited Internet, instead of caps that result in surcharges or reduced service.

"By having unlimited you're not financially exposed to a surcharge from using the Internet," he said.

"For affordability it's important for it to be predictable. When you are in a situation where your income is limited it could be challenging to have a surprising charge."

In comparison, Rogers offers a package for $25 a month that includes speeds of up to 5 Mbps and only 25 GB per month. TekSavvy's lowest rate for DSL Internet is 6 Mbps with a 150 GB cap for $30 a month — the cost rises to $40 per month for unlimited data.

Giguère said even a price difference of $5 or $10 makes a big difference.

"Every dollar makes a difference to tenants living in a low-income situation," he said.

BY THE NUMBERS WHAT LOWEST COST INTERNET GETS YOU

OCH deal	Rogers	TekSavvy
6 Mbps, unlimited usage, $25 per month for those with a telephone landline, or $30 per month without.	Package for $25 a month that includes speeds of up to 5 Mbps and usage capped at 25 GB per month.	DSL Internet is 6 Mbps with a 150 GB cap for $30 a month.

TELECOM

Many left out, say activists

Canada's telecom regulator has declared broadband Internet access a basic service across the country, but local activists say that won't help low-income residents in Ottawa facing high costs.

On Wednesday, the CRTC announced it aims to ensure service providers (ISPs) offer Internet services at speeds of at least 50 megabits per second for downloading data, and 10 Mbps for uploads.

ISPs will also be required to offer unlimited data options for fixed broadband services.

However, unlike the recent CRTC decision to cap the cost of basic TV services, the regulator said it won't propose a cap on what ISPs can charge customers for basic broadband Internet.

That decision disappointed advocacy group ACORN, who had hoped the CRTC decision would mean guaranteed lower prices for basic Internet service.

"We're kind of disappointed there's no subsidy program to help low-income people to make the Internet affordable," said Gisele Bouvier, president of the organization's Vanier chapter.

Bouvier said the infrastructure money announcement will improve service for rural residents, but it doesn't help urban Canadians who are struggling to afford basic service.

The CRTC's report to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development did acknowledge the struggles facing lower-income households, including a EKOS survey that found 36 per cent of respondents are limiting their Internet use due to cost. The report also noted that the government itself asks Canadians to access services online, yet social assistance doesn't factor in the cost of broadband connectivity.

HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

Trevor Greenway says Danielle Allard is one of this city's hardest working musicians. CONTRIBUTED

Thanks for the music

BACKSTAGE PASS

It was a tough year, but these local artists made it better

Trevor Greenway
Metro | Ottawa

It was a tough year in music.

Go through the list of fallen musicians in 2016 and you'll see how much we all lost. But the loss of so many pioneers didn't dampen the scene in Ottawa. In fact, it likely fuelled it. Here's to the Top 5 movers and shakers of Ottawa in 2016

Danielle Allard

Ottawa songstress Danielle Allard is arguably Ottawa's hardest-working musician. She works full time teaching communications at Algonquin College, she's a producer at Rogers Ottawa and still finds time to play a ton of shows, many of them local benefits.

Mike Mikkelsen

All you need to do is look at the roster of DJs Mike Mikkelsen has brought into his Kinki After Dark Series this year: Scratch Bastid, DJ Scratch, Mat the Alien, ONIONZ. Mikkelsen of Kapacity Entertainment has been dedicated to elevating Ottawa's DJ and hip-hop culture since 1999. He's brought in the likes of Afrika Bambaataa, Questlove, Erykah Badu, DJ AM, A-Trak, Chromeo and Wu-Tang Clan.

Mackenzie Di Millo

When we first heard Mackenzie Di Millo's teenage voice six years ago on her first Monday I Retire record, it was just that: a teenager with a sweet voice trying to make it in the sonic world.

But it didn't come without hard work. Di Millo spent four years crafting her sound at Carleton's vocal jazz school, where she learned everything you hear in her smoky jazz voice today. The hard work sure paid off. Monday I Retire's latest studio venture is a groovy campaign filled with Di Millo's buttery vocals, M.J. Heney's silky guitar and Stephen Adubofuor's pleasing popcorn drumming.

Riishi Von Rex

Those who didn't get enough of El Paso prog-rock band The Mars Volta before they disbanded can thank Riishi Von Rex for keeping the train going. Von Rex and co-conspirator Michel Delage exploded onto the scene when they dropped their sinister ska, reggae-prog rock EP in early 2016.

Kelly Symes

Kelly Symes transformed 24 small Ontario communities into premiere music destinations this fall with her Festival of Small Halls. Symes and her team made it possible for music fans in towns like Pakenham, Smiths Falls, Gananoque and Burritt's Rapids to host premiere bands like Basia Bulat, Jim Bryson, Brock Zeman and Australia's Hat Fitz and Cara.

Hats off to you and your team, Symes, for bringing the world to small-town Ontario. I wish you were around in northern Saskatchewan when I was a teenager.

Here's to 2017.

PUBLIC WORKS

New hospital site costs still undecided

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

Public Services and Procurement Canada says no decision has been made on how to clean up the future site of the Ottawa Civic Hospital or how to pay for those costs.

The government agency that has control over the former Sir John Carling Building is developing estimates for the cost of removing a large amount of concrete left over from when the building was imploded.

Metro reported earlier this week on documents that show groundwater on the site has been found to contain phenol. The issue was enough of a concern that Environment Canada ordered PSPC to ensure it prevented the chemical from leaking off of the site.

The chemical is believed to have been left behind by the explosives used in the implosion.

A PSPC spokesman said the department is considering excavating and removing all of the concrete, but that's not the only option it is exploring.

"Other short, medium and long term remediation [and] risk management options for the site are also being considered," wrote Nicolas Boucher a spokesperson for the department.

He said they would work with the hospital if the excavation becomes necessary.

"Should the excavation option be chosen, PSPC will work with the Ottawa Hospital to determine how best to manage the excavation from a timing perspective and associated costs," he added.

The Sir John Carling Site has been selected as the site, after a lengthy political process.

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QUEEN'S PARK

Wynne wants debate on bottled water

Ontario plans to increase its charge for water-taking permits for bottled water companies in the new year, but Premier Kathleen Wynne says she wants a bigger discussion on the future of the entire industry.

The province charges $3.71 for every million litres of water taken, on top of a permit fee of $750 for low- or medium-risk water takings.

Wynne wants to see that charge increased, but said price won't be the only factor as the Liberal government considers new rules for bottled water companies.

"Absolutely that needs to go up, but the reason that we wanted a bit more time to look at this is, is that enough? Is it enough that the price just goes up?" she asked in a year-end interview with The Canadian Press.

"I really think we need to look at the culture around bottled water. Why are we all drinking water out of bottles when most of us don't need to?"

Wellington Water Watchers, a group of environmentalists in the Guelph, Ont., area an hours' drive west of Toronto, agreed that increasing the price for permits for bottled water companies won't address concerns about water use.

"It's not just about increasing the price," said Water Watchers chair Mike Nagy. "No price would be high enough to stop some companies from doing what they're doing because the profits are so high."

Wynne imposed a two-year moratorium on permits for new or expanded bottled water operations after Nestle purchased a well that the small but fast-growing township of Centre Wellington wanted for its drinking water supply.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Jonathan Chen from Lisgar Collegiate Institute takes part in the test of the new cauldron. HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

New Year's Eve torch relay set

HOLIDAYS

Event will kick off 2017 celebrations

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

Ottawa's five-metre high 2017 torch outside city hall is ready for New Year's Eve after being installed this week and test-lit on Wednesday.

The official lighting of the fire "cauldron" will take place on Dec. 31 to celebrate the beginning of Canada's 150th birthday.

The cauldron will be lit in a grand ceremony, according to organizers, beginning with indigenous elders and a fire-keeper delivering a sacred fire by torch. That sacred fire will be used to light the cauldron.

Once the sculpture is lit a "Fire of Friendship Torch Relay" involving local youth will take place.

"It will be a spectacular, moving ceremony when we light up the cauldron and then create the almost one kilometre stretch of light and fire with inspiration kids from local schools," said Guy Laflamme, executive director of Ottawa 2017 celebrations.

> **It will be a spectacular, moving ceremony.**
> Guy Laflamme

More than 400 youth, each with a special small torch, will form a human chain from Ottawa city hall to Parliament Hill. They will light their torches one after the other until they get to Olympian Penny Oleksiak, who will wait at the end of Wellington Street.

Oleksiak's torch will then to be used for a ceremony at the Centennial Flame outside of Parliament Hill.

The cauldron, now installed just outside city hall, will remain a "special landmark throughout the year and will be re-lit for special occasions."

The cauldron's burner is the same one used at the Vancouver Olympics in 2010. The torch is fuelled by natural gas from Enbridge. The Canadian Gas Association and Enbridge covered the costs of the building of the cauldron.

Two local high school students, Jonathan Chen from Lisgar Collegiate Institute and Caitlin Gilchrist from Mother Teresa High School, demonstrated the miniature torches on Wednesday during the test lighting.

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Jeanette MacDonald was bruised after a home invasion at her basement apartment. JEFF HARPER/METRO

Attacker was 'just a punk'

HALIFAX

Senior recounts brutal attack that outraged a city

Zane Woodford
Metro | Halifax

An 85-year-old woman says she was "petrified" as she was repeatedly punched in the face and dragged from her home during a brutal assault in Halifax.

Police say they were called to Jeanette MacDonald's home Tuesday night.

MacDonald said she was home alone when there was a knock at the door. She called out to ask who was there, and when there was no answer, she went to the door.

"I opened the door, and the first thing he said was, 'Give me the money.' I said, 'What the hell are you talking about, I'm not giving you no money.' And he hit me with his fist in my face," MacDonald said in an interview Wednesday morning.

MacDonald said the man, who she'd never seen before, told her he had a gun and knife. She continued to refuse his demands for money, and he dragged her outside.

"He said, 'Here's one for ya,' and he let me have it right in the face again," she said.

MacDonald's neighbours rushed to her side when they heard her cries for help.

"I was screaming, I couldn't stand the pain," MacDonald said.

She said the suspect ran away behind her home.

"Just a punk, that's all he was," MacDonald said.

Paramedics treated MacDonald's injuries at the scene. On Wednesday morning, she had two black eyes, a large bruise on her chest, and her hand was swollen.

"I'm not feeling too bad now, like I was at first, but I'm sore," she said.

Halifax police spokeswoman Const. Dianne Penfound said Wednesday afternoon that police had no further leads or information on the case.

Woman claims she was fired for lack of heels

Haley Ryan
Metro | Halifax

A Dartmouth single mom is questioning whether her recent firing from a popular Halifax nightclub was over high heels, but her employer says they did everything "in line with labour standards."

Ally Robinson, 25, said she's worked in the service industry for years, including at Grafton Connor Group locations like Cheers, and as a bartender at The Dome since October. Last Friday, Robinson said a manager sent her home for not wearing high heels during her shift.

The next day, Robinson said she was dismissed by the same woman who told her she was being let go due to not wearing heels, but then added, according to Robinson, "I don't need to give you a reason at all," because the 25-year-old was still under the probation period.

"It doesn't seem fair," Robinson says.

Robinson said she'd had issues with that particular manager harassing her since she began working at The Dome, and shaming her in front of other employees.

AFGHANISTAN

First sight of grandchildren: in hostage video

The parents of a Canadian man held hostage in Afghanistan say a recently released video of their son and his family marks the first time they've seen their two grandchildren, who were born in captivity.

Canadian Joshua Boyle and his American wife, Caitlan Coleman, were kidnapped in 2012 while travelling in a mountainous region of northern Afghanistan.

In a video uploaded to YouTube, Coleman — sitting next to her husband and two young children — urges governments on all sides to reach a deal to secure the family's freedom.

Boyle's parents, Patrick and Linda Boyle, said they watched the video on Monday, getting their first glimpse at their young grandsons.

"It is an indescribable emotional sense one has watching a grandson making faces at the camera, while hearing our son's leg chains clanging up and down on the floor," the Boyles said.

The parents say their son told them in a letter that he and his wife have tried to protect their children by pretending their signs of captivity are part of a game being played with guards.

"It is simply heartbreaking to watch both boys so keenly observing their new surroundings in a makeshift film studio, while listening to their mother describe how they were made to watch her being defiled," the Boyles said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Joshua Boyle and Caitlan Coleman's children. TWITTER

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For more holiday fun, visit us online at westborovillage.com/whats-on.

Mexicans search for loved ones, answers after blast

SAN PABLITO

Officials say it's too early to identify cause of explosion

Relatives of workers at a fireworks market flattened by a deadly chain-reaction explosion searched hospitals for loved ones Wednesday as attention focused on apparent lax security that allowed vendors to display their dangerous wares in the passageways between stalls.

Health Secretary Cesar Gomez Monge of Mexico State, where the San Pablito Market is located, said another victim died in a hospital, raising the fatal toll to 32. About 46 people remained hospitalized, five of them in such serious condition that they were fighting for their lives, he added. Ten of the injured were minors including one girl with burns over 90 per cent of her body.

Juana Antolina Hernandez, who has run a stand for 22 years in San Pablito next to one operated by her parents, escaped the market in a mad dash when the explosions began Tuesday afternoon. The following day she was one of the disconsolate residents waiting outside a local morgue.

"I can't find my father, and my mother is very badly burned," said Hernandez, 49. "I am waiting here for them to tell me if my father is here, but up to this point, nothing."

San Pablito was especially well stocked for the holidays and bustling with hundreds of shoppers when the blast reduced the market to a stark expanse of ash, rubble and the scorched metal, casting a pall over the Christmas season. Dramatic video of the explosion showed a towering plume of smoke that was lit up by a staccato of bangs and flashes of light, the third such incident to ravage the market on the northern outskirts of Mexico's capital since 2005.

Officials in Mexico State, which borders Mexico City, said it was too early to identify a cause of the massive series of blasts. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Officials walk through the rubble of the San Pablito fireworks market that exploded in Tultepec on the outskirts of Mexico City, Wednesday. The market was well-stocked for the holidays and bustling with hundreds of shoppers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GLOBAL DIGEST

BERLIN

Officials had monitored truck attack suspect

German officials had deemed the Tunisian man being sought in a manhunt across Europe a threat long before a truck plowed into a Christmas market in Berlin — and even kept him under covert surveillance for six months this year before halting the operation.

Now the international manhunt for Anis Amri — considered the prime suspect in Monday's deadly rampage — is raising questions about how closely German authorities are monitoring the hundreds of known Islamic extremists in the country. The issue puts new pressure on Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is running for re-election next year. Critics are lambasting her for allowing hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers to enter the country, allegedly without proper security checks.

TURKEY

Ambassador's killer linked to US-based cleric Gulen

Turkey's president on Wednesday implicated a U.S.-based Muslim cleric in the killing of Russia's envoy to Turkey, saying the policeman who carried out the attack was a member of his "terror organization."

Turkey has accused Fethullah Gulen of trying to destabilize Turkey and says his movement is behind a failed military coup in July aimed at toppling the Turkish leader. Gulen has denied any involvement in the coup. The government however, has labelled the movement "the FETO terror organization" and has cracked down on Gulen's followers, arresting tens of thousands of people for their alleged link to the coup and purging more than 100,000 suspected supporters from government jobs.

TURKEY

7-year-old Aleppo tweeter safe in Turkey

A 7-year-old Syrian girl who was evacuated on Monday from eastern Aleppo and whose mother ran a Twitter account in her name met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the Turkish capital, Ankara.

Bana Alabed's mother, Fatemah, began operating the account in September, tweeting on her daughter's behalf.

The account has garnered some 354,000 followers, and has included tweets to Michelle Obama and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, asking for help. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

This *Employment Ontario* program is funded by the Ontario government.

In this photo taken Feb. 7, 2001, a herder walks past a pile of dead animals in the hills of Hentii province after a severe snowstorm, also known as a Dzud, in Mongolia. Another unusually harsh winter in Mongolia that's decimating livestock and sending temperatures to minus 56 degrees C may create a humanitarian crisis. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EXTREME WEATHER

Aid groups warn of crisis as Mongolia hit by harsh winter

Another unusually harsh winter in Mongolia that's decimating livestock and sending temperatures to minus 56 degrees Celsius (minus 70 Fahrenheit) may create a humanitarian crisis, with worse conditions still to come, aid groups warn.

Save the Children and the International Federation of the Red Cross said Wednesday that this winter will likely see vast swathes of the Mongolian steppe affected by the extreme weather phenomenon known in Mongolia as "dzud."

A dzud typically happens once a decade but could strike for the second consecutive year. The dzud last year killed more than 1 million animals, afflicting the majority of Mongolians who depend on livestock for food, milk and income.

The Mongolian government said last week it met with international organizations including Save the Children, the Red Cross and the United Nations Development Program to discuss efforts to deliver heating, fuel and medical supplies amid "worsening" conditions and heavy snowfall.

Aid groups say the situation is compounded by last year's harsh winter and a deep recession amid a market bust for Mongolia's mineral exports. The country is struggling to repay debt with its hard currency stocks while household savings have also evaporated.

Red Cross disaster program manager in Mongolia Davaajargal Batdorj said more livestock deaths are expected this year with areas of the country already buried under 1 metre of snow. The organization will begin sending cash to herder families in the far west in the coming weeks.

"It's a natural disaster on top of an economic crisis," Davaajargal said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Broadband a basic service: Regulator

INTERNET ACCESS

Providers must offer unlimited options, speeds of 50 Mbps

Canada's telecom regulator has declared broadband internet access a basic service across the country, just like current landline telephone service.

But making full access to ultra-high-speed services a reality could cost tens of billions of dollars, and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission said Wednesday that achieving the goal will take a coordinated effort by it, businesses and governments.

The aim is to ensure service providers (ISPs) offer internet services nationwide at speeds of at least 50 megabits per second for downloading data, and 10 Mbps for uploads, the CRTC said in announcing the new targets. Currently, about 82 per cent of households and businesses receive that level of service. The CRTC wants that increased to 90 per cent by 2021.

ISPs will also be required to offer unlimited data options for fixed broadband services.

"Access to broadband internet service is vital and a basic telecommunication service all Canadians are entitled to receive," said CRTC chairman Jean-Pierre Blais.

As part of the decision, telecom firms will have access to an escalating $750-million industry-sponsored fund over the next five years to invest in broadband infrastructure.

The first $100 million of that will come from a fund that currently subsidizes telephone services in isolated regions.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CRTC Chairman Jean-Pierre Blais announces the ruling on basic telecommunications service. THE CANADIAN PRESS

EMPLOYMENT

Face-to-face crucial for young job seekers

A new report from the federal government's expert panel on youth employment points to a need to move away from digital services for young, first-time job seekers and instead offer more person-to-person contacts and services.

In an interim report released Wednesday, the panel described how young people complete hundreds of online job applications without receiving any response from employers and that the reliance on using personal networks to find jobs is unreasonably high.

> **We are deluding ourselves if we think digitizing the job application process makes it more democratic.**
> Vass Bednar

Young people with the most success at landing a job do so through the people they know and for those without such a network, the necessity to build connections can be overly intimidating, the report said.

"We are deluding ourselves if we think that by digitizing the job application process we are making it more democratic. Network effects are as strong as ever and this hurts young people with less social capital," said panel chairwoman Vass Bednar.

The panel's interim report found young Canadians have high levels of anxiety about their future work prospects, even those with post-secondary education and previous job experience — two keys frequently cited as an avenue to a good job.

A Statistics Canada study released earlier this month showed that young people have seen their job quality decline over 40 years, even as the youth unemployment rate has remained relatively unchanged. In both 1976 and 2015 it was 2.3 times higher than the rate among those aged 25 and older.

The Liberals made sweeping promises to young Canadians as part of their election platform. One plank has yet to materialize as federal policy: a vow to waive EI premiums for 12 months for any employer who gives someone between the ages of 18 and 24 a full-time job.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

market minute

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74.59¢ (–0.22¢)

TSX 15,305.89 (+12.93)

OIL $52.49 US (–81¢)

GOLD $1,133.20 US (–40¢)

NATURAL GAS: $3.54 US (+28¢)
DOW JONES: 19,941.96 (–32.66)

HOUSING

Homes less affordable

RBC Economics Research says owning a home in Canada is less affordable now than at any time in nearly eight years with the average affordability measure set at 44.3 per cent. The report also shows that for the first time in almost two years, Greater Toronto pushed the Vancouver area from top spot as the city with the most significant erosion in affordability.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, December 22, 2016

CHANTAL HÉBERT ON POLITICAL NEWS' DECENTRALIZATION

The days when there was something special or newsworthy about a broadcaster serving up a prime minister to a festive nation have gone.

Once a staple of the holiday news season, the televised prime ministerial fireside chats are well on the way to joining the ghosts of Christmases past.

The CBC and Radio-Canada — among others — have opted out of the format, rightly concluding that the days when there was something special or, for that matter, newsworthy about deferentially serving up a prime minister to a festive nation had gone.

So have the days when a government leader had to rely on a handful of major networks to reach a national audience.

Interviews with the prime minister are a dime a dozen this December. On top of various year-end Parliament Hill interviews and a news conference, Trudeau has spent the past week on a year-end tour.

At the end of last week, he was in Montreal taking questions from Radio-Canada viewers. This week he spent time in Vancouver and Calgary.

There was a time when a contingent of Parliament Hill reporters would have tagged along. But trips outside the parliamentary precinct are so few now, as it is possible to catch Trudeau live in action from one's computer at no cost to media organizations.

This year marked the 150th anniversary of the Parliamentary Press Gallery. For its members, it was a bittersweet occasion.

In tandem with the larger journalism universe the gallery's membership has been shrinking. That may be even truer of the institution's collective influence. The challenging economics of journalism tell only part of the story.

When I came to Parliament Hill in the late '80s, Le Devoir's Montreal-based justice reporter would hop on a bus and travel to Ottawa every time the Supreme Court released a major ruling.

Collecting it in person was the only way to get the text of a decision on the day it was rendered. For that reason, larger news organizations often based their justice reporter on Parliament Hill.

With the exception of the televised House debates, pretty much anything that happened around or on the Hill was only accessible to journalists who were physically present on the premises. It was impossible to keep up with the narrative at a distance from the capital. The members of the gallery truly were the ears and eyes of Canadians on Parliament Hill for more than a century.

These days, most of the fireworks in Canadian political news comes from reporters and commentators outside Ottawa.
THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

But today, the Globe and Mail's André Picard writes the most authoritative health-policy column on offer … from Montreal.

In English as in French, the bulk of the immigration and foreign-policy commentary and analysis no longer emanates from Parliament Hill bureaus.

Every year, the budget lockup draws a gaggle of columnists and editorialists who normally toil in Montreal and Toronto. With access to federal finance documents at the tip of anyone's fingers, more fiscal policy coverage than ever is done outside the federal capital. And, of course, it is no longer necessary to have a desk a few blocks down from the Supreme Court to obtain its rulings in real time.

The much-watched At Issue panel on CBC's The National has never had a permanent member whose exclusive workplace was Parliament Hill. (I have been splitting my time between the federal capital and Montreal for 20 years.) And yet parliamentary insiders regularly vote it as the most influential media panel.

Over the years, a lot of policy expertise and knowledge has been farmed out of the press gallery, and, with it, many of the relationships that ministers and mandarins used to nurture with those who were on the beats that pertained to their portfolios.

As a consequence but also as the result of the practice of clickbaiting, the ratio of politics reporting versus public policy coverage coming out of the parliamentary press has steadily increased. The press gallery has become more diverse but polls suggest its output has tended to become less germane to the priorities of voters.

Parliament Hill remains the only place in the country where conflicting political currents come to clash. The dynamics are a must-watch for anyone who wants to understand how complex Canada is. That is not easily done via a computer screen.

It is impossible to imagine national political coverage without a parliamentary component. But regardless of their number, the daily reporting of Parliament Hill media insiders is probably no more likely to be restored to pride of place in the national conversation than the cosy fireside chats of the not-so-distant past.

Over the years, a lot of policy expertise and knowledge has been farmed out of the parliamentary press gallery.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer.

VICKY MOCHAMA

It's better to give than to receive, but taking has its place, too

In the lead-up to the Plunderer-Elect of the United States taking the oath of office, it's become clear that this is the Age of the Thief.

Almost every cabinet appointment seems designed to enrich either the Trumps or their billionaire friends. Trump is draining the swamp but only so he can sell the water back to the thirsty swamp dwellers in gold-embossed bottles.

The next four years will consist of so many bold acts of theft. And not just in the United States.

In Toronto, police are searching for a white male who has robbed five downtown banks in the last month. However, knowing that the public loves a criminal they can cheer for — hello, all superheroes — the police have adorably named him the "lunchtime bandit." Such creativity from a force that has only managed to come up with Black Male Known To Police for so many other suspects.

(If I'm ever arrested, please tell the police my moniker is White Woman.)

The robber is brazen but only because he knows that no one suspects clean-cut white men of crimes. He can simply slide a note to a teller saying he's armed and be out of there in minutes.

According to Staff Insp. Mike Earl, this particular perp might not be all bad. "Maybe he's never been in trouble before," he said. "Maybe he's an educated individual who's down and out and this is his only hope to get some kind of money."

That is exactly the kind of empathy that we'll need in the coming years. No one is a criminal anymore! Donald Trump isn't a fascist and a kleptocrat. He's just "an educated individual" trying to make a living.

For that reason, Doris Payne is my Pilferer of the Year. Doris is an international jewel thief who has spent over five decades stealing expensive jewelry. And getting away with it. My girl Doris, who is 86, was arrested just last week for stealing a necklace in suburban Atlanta.

While former stockbroker and convicted fraudster Jordan Belfort got an Oscar-worthy portrayal by Leonardo DiCaprio, Doris's 50 years of high-stakes thievery has so far only generated rumours of a Halle Berry-attached biopic.

(DiCaprio himself seems to like a scammer; he also played conman-turned-FBI consultant Frank Abagnale in 2002's Catch Me If You Can.)

Doris Payne's story is like the Thomas Crowne Affair meets the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, but starring a fabulous and unrepentant black woman. What does a black woman have to steal to get Viola Desmond to play her?

In this season of giving, let's not forget to celebrate the takers.

metro
Your essential daily news

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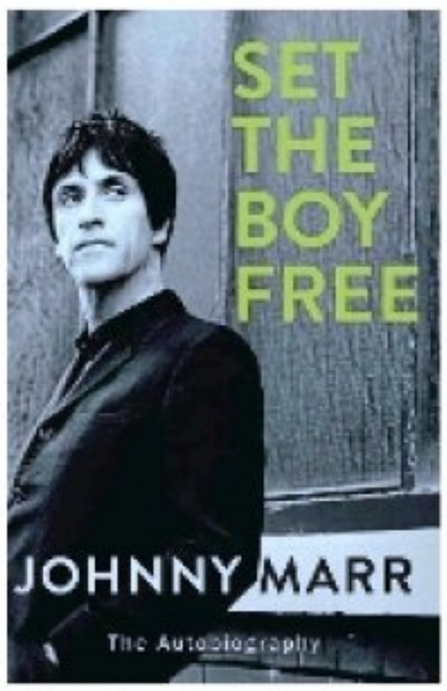
Your essential daily news
Movie magic is real: Disney is first studio to break $7 billion globally at the box office this year

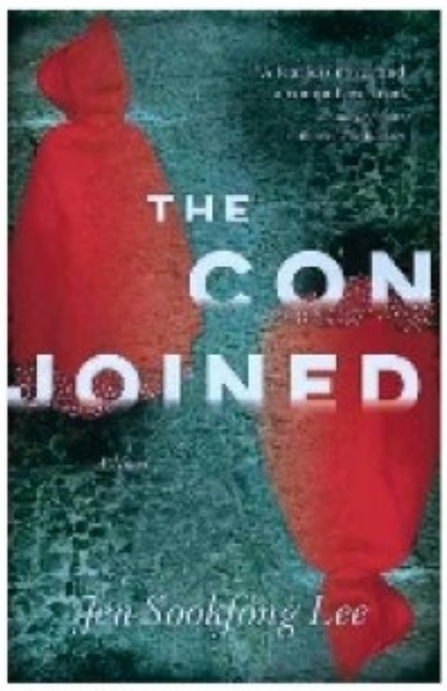
Overlooked but wonderful reads

With thousands of books published each year, narrowing down a new holiday read or gift can be daunting. There are the award winners and the bestsellers, the book club picks and the big names. But if you're looking for something a little different, here are five titles worth seeking out: **SUE CARTER/FOR METRO**



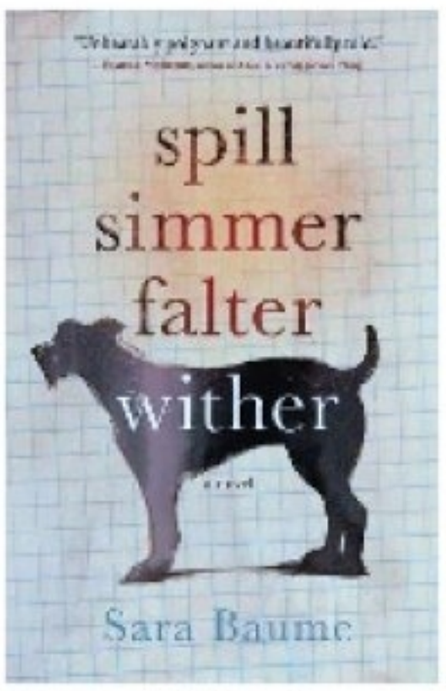
The fascinating Mr Smiths

In a year dominated by memoirs from Bruce Springsteen, Amy Schumer and Carrie Fisher, it was easy to miss Johnny Marr's **Set the Boy Free**. Marr and Morrissey, who co-formed the beloved 1980s band the Smiths, became as famous for their contentious break-up as their writing partnership. But Marr's entertaining autobiography keeps the mudslinging to a minimum, delivering a delightful history of a life dedicated to music.



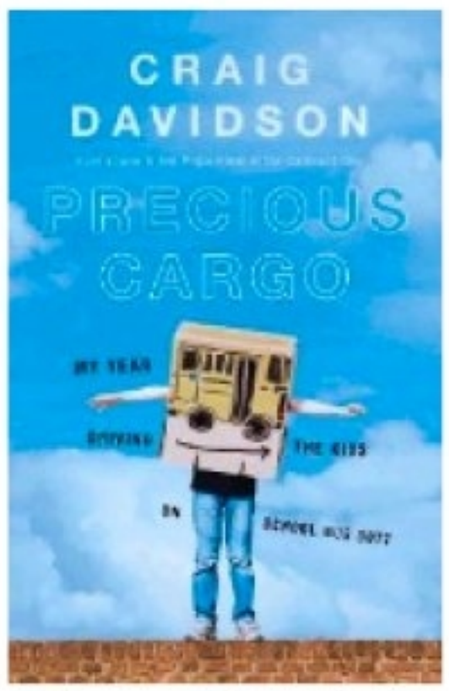
Thrill ride through Vancouver

Vancouver author Jen Sookfong Lee combines literary and crime fiction in her third novel **The Conjoined**, about a social worker who discovers the bodies of two girls — who turn out to be long-missing troubled foster children — in her recently deceased mother's freezers. Lee draws from Vancouver's social history, pop culture and an exploration of family dynamics for a woman-focused, refreshing take on the traditional thriller.



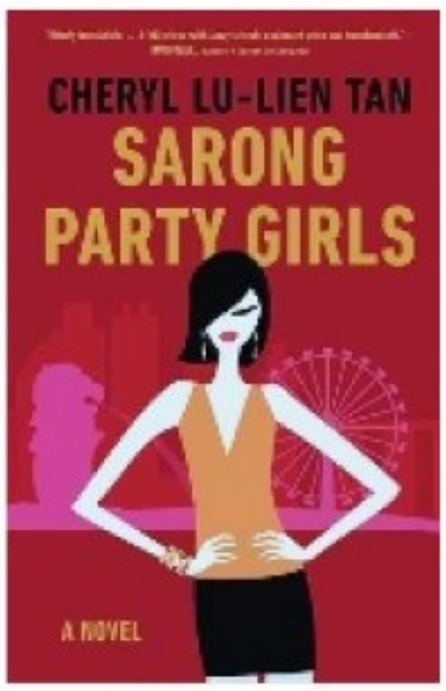
Man and dog in dark times

Before it was published in Canada this year, Irish writer Sara Baume received a long list of accolades in the U.K. for her debut novel **Spill Simmer Falter Wither**, set in a small village inspired by her own home. Baume breathes new life into an old trope about a man and his dog, with beautiful, lyrical language and a startling, dark conclusion. This is one of the most quietly devastating books of the year.



A funny, charming bus journey

Craig Davidson has earned a tough-guy reputation, both for his hard-hitting books (and the film adaptation of Rust and Bone) and his horror-writing pseudonym Nick Cutter. In his charming memoir **Precious Cargo: My Year of Driving the Kids on School Bus 3077**, the Calgary author recalls a tough period when he took a job driving a bus for special-needs students, proving that he is also sensitive and empathetic, with a sharp sense of humour.



Single women on a mission

Journalist Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan's first novel, **Sarong Party Girls**, explores the lives of Jazzy and her friends, all twenty-something Singapore women on a mission to snag rich *ang moh* (Western expat) husbands and to give birth to "Chanel babies." Told in 'Singlish' — a hybrid patois of Singaporean English — Tan, who did plenty of research to capture the scene, exposes a sordid but fascinating world of nightclubs and lounges ruled by racism and misogyny.

BOOK SALES

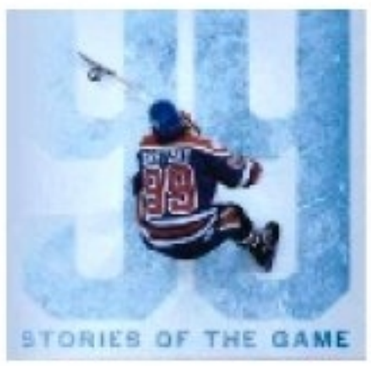
Gretzky skates away with another title as year's biggest seller

Wayne Gretzky has scored a literary win by penning the top-selling Canadian title of 2016.

BookNet Canada identified the top-selling books over a 48-week period, from Jan. 4 to Dec. 4.

99: Stories of the Game written by Gretzky and Kirstie McLellan Day was No. 1 on the non-fiction list, ahead of Oh She Glows Every Day by Canadian blogger Angela Liddon, and The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up by Marie Kondo.

In the fiction category, The Nest by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney took the top spot.



The Couple Next Door by Toronto author Shari Lapena was the highest-ranked Canadian title, in eighth place, one spot ahead of The Illegal by award-winning author Lawrence Hill.

Noah Genner, president and CEO of BookNet Canada, said year-to-date print book sales have been fairly flat compared to 2015.

The market bumped up for the first time in a few years in 2015 due in part to the colouring book craze, he noted.

"Last year, colouring books were massive ... and they had a huge year and sold really well — especially near Christmas as Christmas gifts. It actually was enough to lift the whole market up," said Genner.

"This year, we're not seeing that same lift from the colouring book. They're still selling well, but not anywhere near where they were selling last year. Last year was a phenomenon.

"Generally, it's been a pretty good year in print book sales, actually, both at the indies and at the chains and online. It's been pretty consistent across all the channels."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TOP SELLERS OF 2016

Fiction

1. The Nest by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney
2. The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins
3. All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr
4. The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins (Movie Tie-in Edition)
5. Me Before You by Jojo Moyes

Non-fiction

1. 99 by Wayne Gretzky with Kirstie McLellan Day
2. Oh She Glows Every Day by Angela Liddon
3. The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up by Marie Kondo
4. Tropical World by Millie Marotta
5. Milk and Honey by Rupi Kaur BOOKNET CANADA

Lena Dunham said she would never intentionally 'trivialize the challenges of terminating a pregnancy.' THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Dunham apologizes over 'joke'

ENTERTAINMENT

On her podcast star said she wished she had an abortion

Lena Dunham has apologized for saying she wished she had an abortion. Dunham made the comment on last week's episode of her Women of the Hour podcast, while talking about a self-realization.

She said that, even though she speaks against stigmatizing abortion, she found herself saying adamantly that she had never had one when she was asked to be part of a project involving women discussing their abortions.

In reference to this contradiction, she said:

"Now, I can say that I still haven't had an abortion, but I wish I had."

The comment drew criticism online.

On Tuesday, the Girls star apologized on Instagram for what she called "a distasteful joke."

She said she "would never, ever intentionally trivialize the emotional and physical challenges of terminating a pregnancy."

"My only goal is to increase awareness and decrease stigma," Dunham added.

"I take reproductive choice in America more seriously than I take literally anything else, and therefore own full responsibility for any words I speak that don't convey this truth clearly.

"My life is and always will be devoted to reproductive justice and freedom."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JOHANNA SCHNELLER
WHAT I'M WATCHING

Real-life Jeopardy more than a game

THE SHOW: Jeopardy, December 20, 2016
THE MOMENT: The sixth win

The late Cindy Stowell pictured with Alex Trebek. CONTRIBUTED

You could feel North America holding its breath. Cindy Stowell, who died from colon cancer on Dec. 5, was still alive on Jeopardy, after winning five games in a row. (She taped her games in August. The producers and host Alex Trebek knew of her condition; her opponents didn't.)

But here in the sixth game, things are looking dire for the tiny, soft-spoken science content developer with the chic pixie haircut. She enters the final Jeopardy round well behind opponent Julia Kite. The question is insanely specific: "If this U.S. state was a country, it would have been in the top 10 in gold medals with 14 — 9 of them by one man and one woman."

Cindy unveils her answer: Maryland. Correct (Michael Phelps is a Marylander). She unveils her wager: $10,201.00. That puts her one dollar ahead of Julia. Julia unveils her answer: Ohio. America whoops.

You don't really think of Jeopardy as a marketing mastermind, but they are handling this expertly. They kept Cindy's illness quiet at first, then a story appeared in The New York Times, and went viral.

Now, Americans of all stripes are rooting for someone tough, humble and intelligent. Cindy's six-day total is $103,803, which she's donating to cancer research. Somewhere, Charles Dickens is smiling.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

ROSE REISMAN THE SAVVY EATER

THIS WEEK: Christmas caffeine kick

Cozying up with a festive drink can be like eating more than your fair share of dessert!

PICK THIS

Starbucks Grande Holiday Spice Flat White (with 2% milk)

Calories 240
Fat 7g
Saturated Fat 4.5g
Sugar 30g

SKIP THIS

Starbucks Grande Eggnog Latte (with whole milk)

Calories 480
Fat 21g
Saturated Fat 13g
Sugar 52g

HERE'S WHY

Equivalent to five Chapman's Vanilla Frozen Yogurt Bars in fat.

Seasonal beverages are a favourite part of the holidays for many, but beware of drinking your calories and fat. Eggnog is primarily made with whole milk or cream and egg yolks, which is loaded with saturated fats. The Holiday Spice Flat White gives you that festive flavour and feel with about half the calories and sugar, and a fraction of the fat and saturated fat.

Bringing back an old-school Legend

INTERVIEW

Singer's role in La La Land sees him return to musical past

When he was a kid, multiple Grammy winner John Legend was in high school musicals, including You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown and Fiddler on the Roof. So perhaps it was in the cards for him to take on two roles in La La Land, a movie being credited with re-energizing the classic genre.

Written and directed by Damien Chazelle, La La Land opens on Christmas Day.

Legend is both an executive producer on the film and acts and sings onscreen as hit-seeking bandleader Keith. To prepare for the part, Legend worked with an acting coach and learned to play guitar. He also wrote the song he performs with co-star Ryan Gosling, Start a Fire.

Legend's Keith is a longtime friend of jazz musician Sebastian (Gosling), who seems far away from his dream of opening his own club. Keith's band is enjoying success with a far more commercial sound than the purity that Sebastian champions. When Keith offers him a job, it comes at a cost to Sebastian's relationship with struggling actress Mia (Emma Stone) and his vow to stay loyal to his music.

A co-writer on Glory, a Best Original Song Oscar winner from the film Selma, Legend sat down during the Toronto International Film Festival for a Canadian exclusive interview to talk about his work in La La Land.

What job came first: the executive producer or the acting?
It was all kind of bundled together in the same conversation. They wanted me to write a song for (La La Land) and possibly perform in it as an actor . . . and come on as an executive producer to help with the music. But (Chazelle) held out the possibility that he might want me to play Keith and I looked at the role and said, 'Yeah, I could do this.' I understand Keith as a character, and it's something I think I (could) do. Damien took a leap of faith because he had never seen me act before. He had to just speculate that I might be good at it and I think he's OK with his decision now.

We don't know much about the friendship between Sebastian and Keith. Did you work out a backstory?
We talked about that with Damien and basically the idea was that these guys probably went to music school together and they both kind of have the same foundation as talented musicians who come up through the jazz school of thought, but one of them decides to cleave through that tradition more and the other one decides to kind of push himself beyond the boundaries of what traditional jazz would allow. Damien didn't want one to be perceived as inherently better than the other, but just different choices. This has been seen in films before, this idea of selling your soul for rock'n'roll. Right. And so (Chazelle) wanted that tension, but he also didn't want Keith to be a crappy musician that everyone thought, 'Well, that's terrible.' He wanted it to be a viable option; this is good in its own way. It's different from what Gosling's character's trying to do, but it's still a viable option.

You feel their story, you understand what it's like to have a dream and to want to pursue that.
John Legend

John Legend with Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling in La La Land. DALE ROBINETTE/ENTERTAINMENT ONE

Why do you want to be involved with movies?
I've always loved history and . . . a lot of the films that we get involved with and the television shows we get involved with are kind of historically based. And I think film has a power to connect in a really powerful way and a beautiful way, and I love the interaction of film and music, and most of it in things I work on have that interaction where we write songs for it. For instance, Underground, a television show that we produced (for WGN America), we were very involved in the music, so I feel like it's an extension of my music career and my career as a storyteller and as an artist.

Are movie musicals an old-fashioned concept?
Great stories never go out of style. Great characters never go out of style. Great filmmaking never goes out of style. And I think the power of this film is that you feel a real human connection to Sebastian and Mia, you feel their story, you understand what it's like to have a dream and to want to pursue that. It's really great writing and great dancing, great performances. What's not to like? Even if this genre is supposedly on life support, I think Damien certainly provided enough jolt to it and reinvigorated it for 2016.

How does Ryan Gosling hold up as a musician?
Oh, he's so good! He really worked on being a great pianist for this and I was so impressed. And they (Stone and Gosling) sound great together, their singing and their dancing is just magical. It kind of took me by surprise to see how beautifully they were dancing together.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Baking away the grey days of winter

RECIPE

Even the scent of these simple savoury scones will lift mood

Long, grey winter days are the best times to get back into baking.

It's too cold to go out, so you've got time to kill around the house, plus the wonderful smell of warm breads and cakes will put even the biggest hater of winter into a cheerful mood again.

Daphna Rabinovitch's recipe for savoury scones from her book The Baker In Me make for a real breakfast treat.

These delectable scones are so easy to make and the only drawback is that you'll have a hard time resisting the urge to keep them all to yourself.

Once you've got this recipe down, try subbing in different fillings.

Perhaps a rosemary and sundried tomato with pecorino, dill and cheddar, or whatever herbs and vegetables are left over from holiday dinners.

Gruyère, Prosciutto and Chive Scones

Makes 12 scones

Ingredients:

- 2-1/3 cups (580 mL) all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) baking powder
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) cold, unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 3/4 cup (180 mL) cold buttermilk
- 1 cold large egg
- 3/4 cup (180 mL) shredded Gruyère
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped prosciutto or cooked bacon
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) chopped chives

These savoury scones make for a delectable breakfast treat. KARON LIU/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 F (200 C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.

2. Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and black pepper in a food processor fitted with blade attachment to combine ingredients.

3. Add butter and pulse until butter is cut into small pea-sized chunks. (Alternatively, use a large bowl to mix everything and use a pastry cutter or two knives to cut butter into pea-sized chunks.) Transfer mixture to a large bowl.

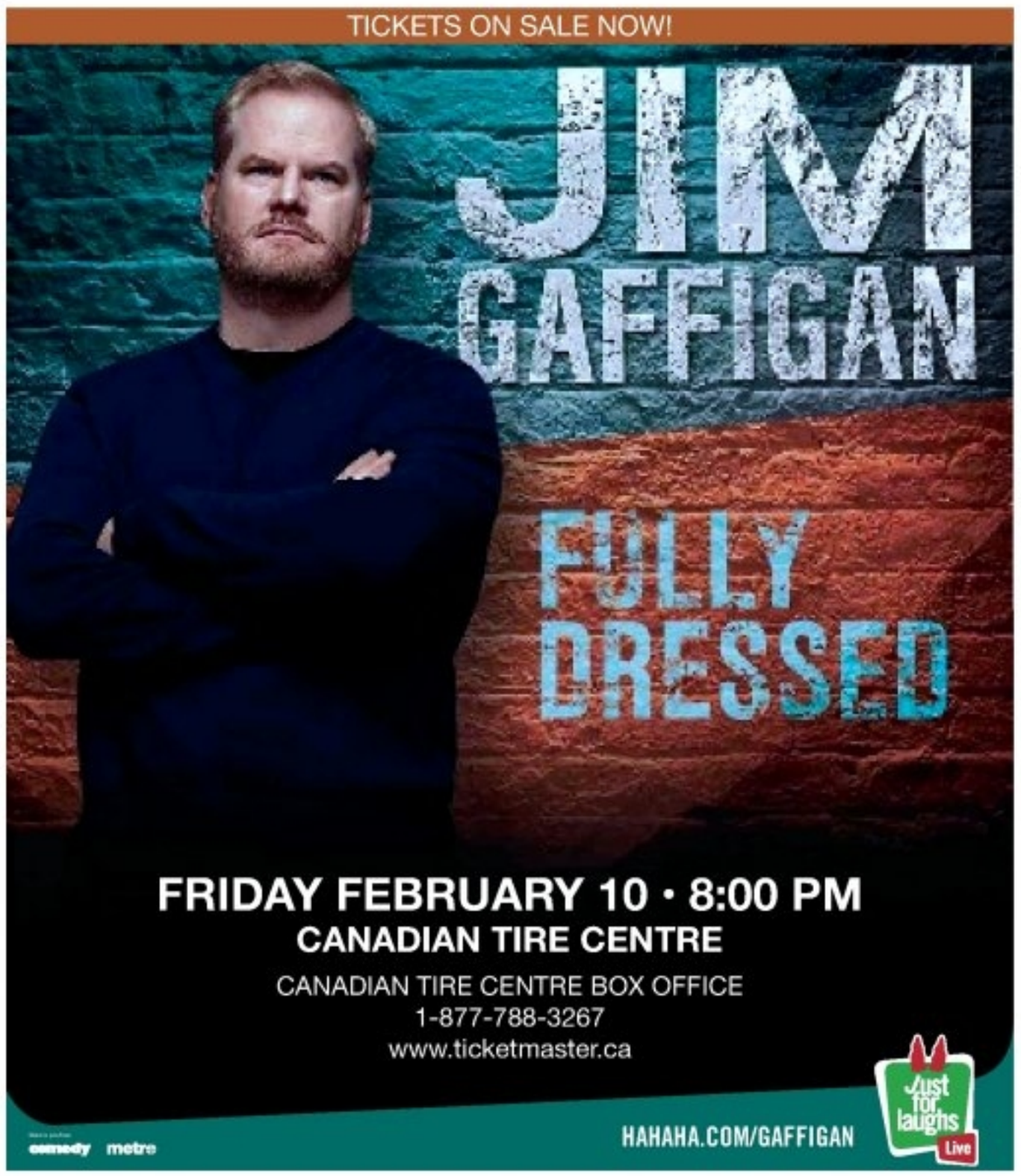
4. In a small bowl, whisk together buttermilk and egg. Pour over flour mixture along with cheese, prosciutto and chives. Toss with a fork until mixture is thoroughly moistened. Some flour may not be fully incorporated, that's OK.

5. Transfer dough to a clean work surface and knead gently until dough just forms a moist, cohesive ball. Pat dough down to a rectangle that is 8-by-5 inches (20-by-12 cm) long and 1-inch (2.5 cm) high.

6. With a knife or pastry cutter, cut rectangle in half lengthwise. Cut each half into 6 triangles. Transfer scones to lined baking sheet.

7. Bake in centre of oven for 16 to 18 minutes, until scones are golden and baked through. Cool scones on a wire rack for at least 5 minutes before serving.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



RECIPE

Canapes save on holiday hassle

When it comes to planning party menus, we often think the most special dishes are the most complicated ones, with exotic and expensive ingredients. But often, it's the classic recipes that rely on familiar flavours that your guests will remember.

Food trends are cyclical, and right now, to the benefit of party hosts and chefs, diners are craving unfussy recipes that rely on the quality of its ingredients. This party classic for prosciutto and melon canapes are a quick-and-easy small bite that will shine on your holiday table.

A canape is a small, one-or-two bite hors d'oeuvre, usually consisting of a piece of bread or cracker topped with, well, anything. They are great for parties, since they are not too filling and easy to eat when one hand is occupied by a glass of champagne. And for the host, they are a breeze to make during the busy holiday season.

You can make toppings ahead of time, like chutneys or caramelized onions, or even rely on prepared ingredients with great flavour combinations. Brie and fig jam on crackers, for example, needs no preparation.

Prosciutto, a salty cured ham from Italy, and melon are a classic combination. Thanks to our global food market, sweet cantaloupe and honey dew melons can be found year-round, and their brightness reminds us that there is some warm sunshine following the cold winter.

This party classic will shine on your table. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A slice of prosciutto adds a savory twist and a satisfying texture. We like to spread our soft white bread canape base with a little bit of mascarpone cheese before topping it, but you could even use a soft goat cheese or an herbed spreadable fresh cheese.

This canape relies on flavour from the melon. Look for melons with no stem attached, since that means it was picked mature.

Prosciutto and Melon Canape

Servings information.

Ingredients:

- 8 very thin slices prosciutto (about 5 ounces)
- 30 (1 1/2-inch-diamater) round white bread canape bases, toasted
- 5 ounces mascarpone cheese, or as needed
- 30 pieces cantaloupe, cut into medium dice, or scooped into 1/2-inch balls
- 30 mint leaves

Directions:

1. Fold the prosciutto to fit the canape bases.

2. To assemble the canapes, spread the canape with some of the mascarpone cheese and top with a piece of prosciutto.

3. Pipe a small mound of mascarpone in the centre of each canape and top with cut melon. Top each canape with a mint leaf.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LIQUID ASSETS
PETER ROCKWELL

Three perfect partners for the big bird

What wine goes with turkey? When you write about booze, you hear that question more than White Christmas at seasonal get-togethers.

Truth be told, the big bird is pretty accommodating when it comes to a liquid partner. The ideal match is actually less about the meat and more about the side dishes which, on December 25th, can be anything from herbaceous and earthy to sweet and tangy. Here are three perfect, all-purpose pairings.

Moselland 2014 Ars Vitis Riesling ($11.95-$15.99): One for those who like a hint of sweetness. Easy-drinking, and in-law friendly, with its cool window label design this German drinks as good as it looks.

Lindemans 2014 Bin 65 Chardonnay ($10.95-$12.99): Dry and lightly oaked, it's a Down Under white layered with bright tropical fruit and balanced acidity.

Kim Crawford 2015 South Island Pinot Noir ($19.95-$21.99): For the red lovers, a New Zealander that combines ripe, New World flavours with old-school European sophistication.

From me to you, have a safe and happy holidays.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

Weaving a basket of festive delights

Adding cream cheese to your cookie dough helps to keep your Christmas cookies softer and lighter in texture with a tangier flavour too. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RECIPE

Nutty cookies forgiving for those without nimble fingers

Chocolatey and nutty with a fairly light texture thanks to the cream cheese, this recipe is adapted from this year's Better Homes and Gardens' Christmas Cookies issue.

They were originally pinwheel shapes but the basket shape that comes from folding all the cookie flaps is also lovely. This shape is also more forgiving for those who don't have nimble fingers.

Cookie tip: Experiment with cream cheese in cookie dough by replacing 1/4 cup of the butter with the same amount of full fat cream cheese to get a softer, lighter texture with a soft tanginess.

Chocolate-Hazelnut Baskets

Makes 32 cookies.

Ingredients:

- 32 whole shelled hazelnuts
- 3/4 cup (185 mL) room temperature unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) softened cream cheese
- 2/3 cup (160 mL) granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) baking powder
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract
- 2 cups (500 mL) all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2/3 cup (160 mL) Nutella, chilled in fridge

Directions:

1. Spread hazelnuts in a shallow baking pan. Bake for 5 to 10 minutes, or until nuts are slightly browned and fragrant, shaking pan halfway to prevent burning. Let cool and rub off skins with paper towel. Set aside.

2. In a stand mixer with a paddle attachment at medium speed or a large bowl with a mixer on medium, beat butter and cream cheese till fluffy, about 30 seconds. Add sugar, baking powder and salt. Mix for another 2 minutes, scraping down sides of bowl. Mix in egg and vanilla until well-incorporated. Divide dough in half.

3. Roll each dough ball into a 10-inch (25 cm) square between sheets of parchment paper on a clean work surface. Cut out 16, 2 1/2-inch (6 cm) squares. Place squares 1-inch (2.5 cm) apart on a lined baking sheet. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

4. With a knife, cut 1-inch (2.5 cm) slits from each corner to centre. Spoon 1/2 teaspoon of Nutella into centre of each cookie. Fold every tip into centre to form a basket shape. Lightly press toasted hazelnut into centre where corners meet.

5. Bake at 350F (175 C) for 10 to 15 minutes or until edges are firm and edges are slightly puffed. Cool for 5 minutes before transferring to wire racks to cool completely.

6. Store in an airtight container for up to a week or freeze for up to a month.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

metro THE KIT REPORT

#YOW INDEX

The Kit Compact—Canada's fave beauty and fashion brand—brings you Ottawa's best holiday style

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF SMUDGE BEAUTY BAR.

THE ADDRESS
SMUDGE BEAUTY BAR, *223 Dalhousie St.*

The minute you walk into Smudge Beauty Bar, you know you've stumbled upon the sweetest little oasis in town. Located in a two-storey loft that has a relaxed neighbourhood vibe, it's the perfect place to unwind and be pampered after some weekend shopping. We caught up with owners Inaas Kiryakos and Mark Mignault to find out about their inspiration for opening the beauty boutique.

What made you decide to offer express beauty services? "We wanted to open a shop where people could come chill out, be themselves and have great services done at a fair price. We avoided a 'tranquil' or classic spa experience—we're a bit different."

How has North Dal changed since you opened? "North Dal has always been a great little borough, but with so much bar and restaurant influx into the ByWard Market, Dalhousie Street is quickly becoming a preferred boutique destination."

You carry a variety of Canadian apothecary goods. Why is that important? "Not to sound cliché, but we're local. Canadians are doing some amazing things."

What are the hottest nail colours for this winter? "Deep shimmery plums, dark starry navy, velvety and muddy browns and of course (as always) nudes." —*Katie Hession*

STRESS SAVER:
RENT FROCK REPEAT

Have a few dresses hanging out at the back of your closet that haven't seen the light of day since their first (and last) holiday bash? Don't make any more expensive mistakes. Rent Frock Repeat (107 Murray St.) is a ByWard-Market-based dress rental service that lets you rent high-end looks for a fraction of the cost. With a slew of amazing dresses available in sizes 0 to 24 and one-hour private fittings with a stylist, you'll be able to find a perfect dress to sparkle and shine in this season. *Get a 15 per cent discount on your rental when using our promo code: YOW!*

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FROM THE EDITORS OF THE KIT compact

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Responding to the fentanyl crisis

HEALTH

Paramedics try to deal with growing opioid overdoses

JEN TRAPLIN

As health care professionals and policy makers struggle to get a handle on the fentanyl crisis, frontline workers now have to consider its even more frightening — and deadly — cousin, carfentanil.

The synthetic opiate is typically used as a tranquilizer for large animals, like elephants. It's recent confirmed presence on Ontario streets not only poses an increased danger to illicit drug users, but first responders as well.

"Some of these drugs come in powder form, which can lead the powder to become airborne, so, when we respond to scenes, paramedics may accidentally inhale a deadly dose of fentanyl or carfentanil," says Ottawa Paramedic Service spokesperson J.P. Trottier.

The synthetic opiate carfentanil poses an increased danger to both illicit drug users and responders. ISTOCK

Last week, the service sent out reminders to Ottawa paramedics, warning of the extreme dangers of fentanyl and carfentanil and urging them to wear N95 masks for their protection, the same masks first responders wore during the SARS outbreak over a decade ago.

That will likely be the protocol for some time as opioid overdoses in the city continue to rise. Evidence of that is clear in the number of times paramedics have had to administer naloxone, a potentially life-saving medication used to block the effects of opioids, while treating patients.

In 2014, Ottawa paramedics used naloxone 53 times. In 2015, that number climbed to 61. And, in just the first six months of 2016, Ottawa paramedics used naloxone 56 times.

"We anticipate that, this year, our use of naloxone will double over last year. This trend of naloxone use has not stopped and the pace may well have been increasing in the last six months of this year," Trottier says.

"Now we have carfentanil to deal with, which is 100 times more powerful than regular fentanyl, four thousand times more potent than heroin and ten thousand times more potent than morphine. These drugs are extremely powerful and users can get addicted very easily so this is a problem now and one that will only get worse before it gets better."

While Trottier applauds a provincial initiative to provide free, take-home naloxone kits (and training) at pharmacies across Ontario, he stresses it is still vital that paramedics respond in the case of an opioid overdose.

"Even after administering naloxone, friends of family members should still call 911 as the powerful drug and the amount taken is unknown. A dose of naloxone may be just a temporary cure for the overdose."

Sean LeBlanc, founder of Ottawa's Drug User Advocacy League (DUAL). YOUTUBE

Users push to have voices heard

As the conversation among politicians, police and health professionals continues nationally on how best to address the growing opioid crisis in Canada, advocates for drug users are pushing to have their voices heard.

"There's a statement that we use in drug user advocacy and that's 'nothing for us, without us.' We think that when we have professionals along with the people with lived experiences, real change can happen — they're the real experts," says Sean LeBlanc, founder of Ottawa's Drug User Advocacy League (DUAL), an independent, not-for-profit group of current and former drug consumers and their allies.

"It's just like having a bunch of old, white men deciding women's reproductive rights. We just want a basic say in things that are affecting us and I think we deserve that."

While LeBlanc says he's not happy with what he believes was a lack of inclusion of drug users at the recent opioid conference in Ottawa, he is pleased with legislative changes stemming from that discussion, particularly the proposed new measures that would make it easier to open more supervised injection sites, something advocates have been calling for in the Nation's Capital for years.

The issue is one both Mayor Jim Watson and Ottawa Police Chief Charles Bordeleau have long been opposed to. LeBlanc is hoping that will now change.

"Mr. Watson always says that we need more forms of treatment, and I agree with him there, but people need to be alive and relatively healthy in order to access that treatment and this is where supervised injection sites really catch the most marginalized people of our society," he explains.

"It's not a pretty thing but it's something that we need and I think it's just part of the continuum of care." JEN TRAPLIN

DROP INS

DUAL hosts twice-weekly open drop ins for current or former Ottawa-area drug users and their allies.

The drop-ins take place Tuesdays from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at 380 Murray Street and Fridays from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at 216 Murray Street (next to Shepherds of Good Hope).

To contact DUAL, call (613) 608-9915 or visit dualottawa.wordpress.com.

OPIOID USE

Provinces combat the crisis

While fentanyl and other opioid use is on the rise across the country, the problem is most prevalent in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. Here is what each province is doing in an effort to combat the crisis.

ONTARIO

Opioid overdose deaths (2015): 543 total,165 attributed to fentanyl*

In October, Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins announced that opioid use has become the third leading cause of accidental death in the province, killing more Ontarians annually than car accidents. In response to the growing crisis, the minister announced the creation of a comprehensive opioid strategy, which includes the appointment of Ontario's first ever overdose coordinator, Dr. David Williams, the province's chief medical officer of health.

The strategy will see more time and money spent on research, education, expanding access to free naloxone (used to treat opioid overdose) and increasing access to addiction treatment. New legislation also requires patients who receive prescription fentanyl to return their used patches to the pharmacy before they can get new ones.

Police forces are also exploring ways to combat the opioid problem. For example, the Peterborough Police Service announced, by the end of the year, all of its officers will carry naloxone while on duty, a first in the province.

*2016 data not available

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Opioid overdose deaths (2016): 755 total, 374 attributed to fentanyl

On Monday, the BC Coroners Service released a frightening update on the opioid crisis in the province, reporting 128 deaths due to illicit drug use in the month of November alone.

According to the British Columbia government, more than $43 million has gone toward supporting measures to bolster the province's response to the crisis, including deploying mobile medical units in high-risk areas, providing free take-home naloxone kits and investing in research, education and training.

In Vancouver, where 159 people have died of opioid overdoses so far this year, city council recently approved a 0.5 percent property tax increase in order to pay for more resources to deal with the fentanyl overdose crisis.

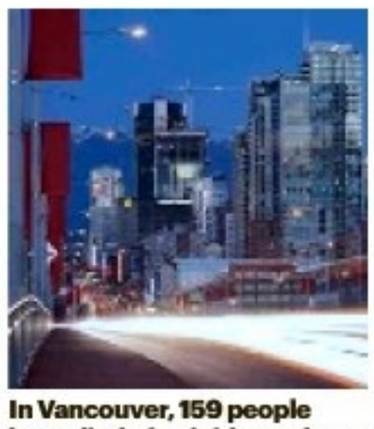
ALBERTA

Opioid overdose deaths (January to September 2016): 338 total, 193 attributed to fentanyl

Similar to Ontario and BC, the province of Alberta has launched a number of initiatives to combat the growing number of opioid-related overdoses in the province.

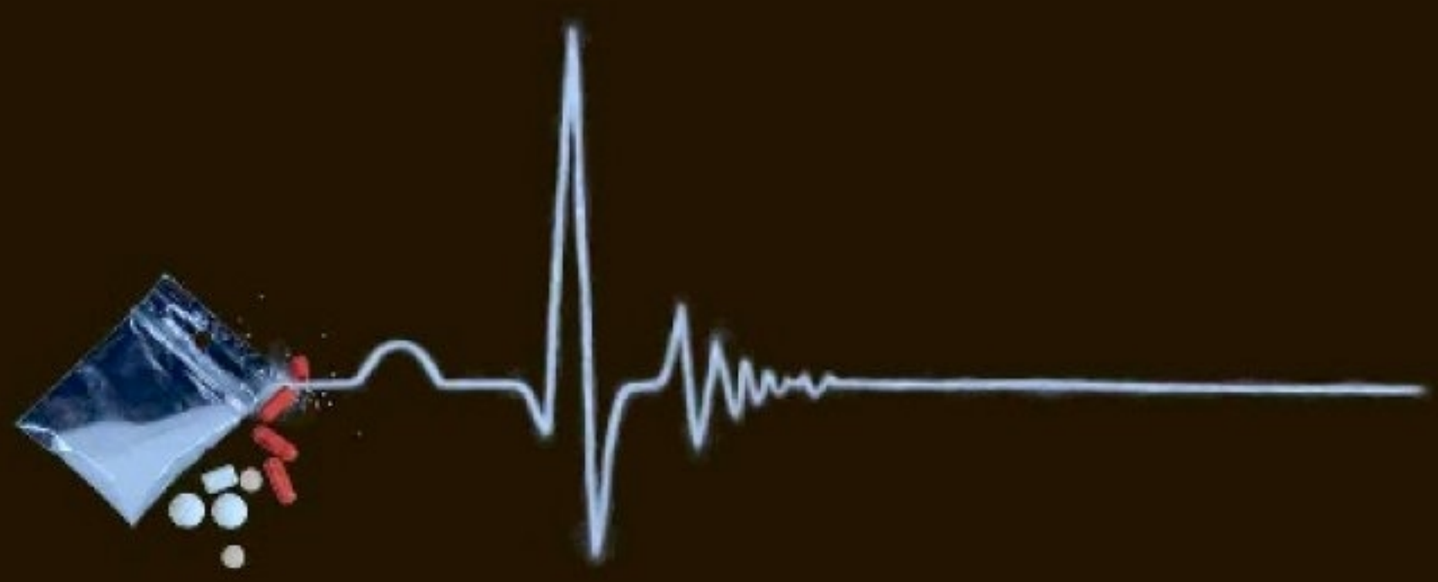
Alberta's designated "provincial response to opioid crisis" includes working closely with health experts, community organizations, advocates and law enforcement to expand access to opioid replacement therapy, provide free take-home naloxone kits and assessing the need for supervised consumption services.

Legislation will also come into effect in January to regulate pill presses used to manufacture illicit fentanyl.


In Vancouver, 159 people have died of opioid overdoses so far this year. ISTOCK

Ottawa Public Health
Santé publique

Anything can be cut with Fentanyl.



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Science-based approaches, including natural, to help with addiction

Addiction is a science-based problem, not a moral failing. Clinical Pharmacist Kent MacLeod has decades of experience helping patients overcome their addictions.

"My rock star genius Kent MacLeod single-handedly brought me back to life when NO ONE else could, let alone believed it was even possible."
– 45-year-old female, Ottawa

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ISTOCK

Fentanyl may only be the lethal tip of the iceberg

Fentanyl is getting awareness because it tragically kills in microgram doses. But some experts believe that discussing fentanyl is only the lethal tip of the iceberg.

Kent MacLeod, clinical pharmacist at Ottawa's NutriChem Compounding Pharmacy and Clinic, says that there's much more to the fentanyl story.

"You may more readily see people who accidentally overdose because it kills in such small amounts, but users didn't get started with fentanyl. We don't have a fentanyl problem: we have a narcotics problem, an opioid problem."

Per capita, Canada is the #2 consumer of opioids in the world, with the United States occupying the top spot. In both countries, most people seeking opioids on the streets started from the legal, prescription pathway.

MacLeod quotes a 2014 study by Cicero et. al. which found shocking differences between todays' heroin users and those of the past. Researchers found that of people entering treatment for heroin addiction who had begun abusing opioids in the 1960s, more than 80 percent had started with heroin. But of those who began abusing opioids in the 2000s, 75 percent reported that their first opioid was actually a prescription drug.

"Our culture has allowed opioids to be prescribed indiscriminately, even for conditions they're not indicated for like fibromyalgia" says MacLeod. "We might not be able to stop all deaths from fentanyl laced with other drugs, but you can certainly reduce the number of users being prescribed opioids in the first place."

MacLeod is involved with de-prescribing, where clinicians aim to either reduce a patient's doses or stop certain medications altogether. Good candidates for de-prescribing are people taking medications that cause them harm, that are no longer providing benefit, or that may be considered inappropriate for them.

When they come to MacLeod, his clients are often taking a dozen or more prescription drugs, sometimes including narcotics, and often self-medicate using alcohol and other substances.

"The chemistry of an addicted brain is proven to be different than a non-addicted brain," says MacLeod. "Addiction and cravings are a science-based problem, not a moral failing. People should see an expert in chemistry to help with the root of their addictions."

To book an appointment with Kent MacLeod, please call one of NutriChem's clinics, or book online at nutrichem.com.

metro HOME
Your essential daily news

A snow globe starring a loved one makes a great DIY gift

MEET THE CONDO

THE MEADOWS

Family-style living

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

The Meadows, a development by Tamarack Homes in Barrhaven, offers a range of townhomes, detached and semi-detached homes, perfect for families. Customers can expect to be able to move into a new home by the fall of 2017. However, there are also quick occupancy homes that are available between now and June.

Housing amenities

The homes have a variety of features such as nine-foot ceilings, ceramic tile and hardwood flooring, granite countertops and spacious, open-concept room designs. Other amenities include ENERGY STAR high-efficiency heating/cooling and ventilation systems.

Location and transit

The community is located right in Barrhaven, with close proximity to Hwy 416 and Strandherd Road. A number of bus routes can take residents downtown, making commuting easy. There are a number of schools and plenty of shopping options in the area.

In the neighbourhood

The Meadows is located in a well-established, family-oriented neighbourhood at Half Moon Bay. Located not far from the Carp River, the area is attractive and great for families — with multiple sports facilities, including the Minto Recreation Complex, which is only a block away. ILANA REIMER/FOR METRO

NEED TO KNOW

What: The Meadows
Builder: Tamarack Homes
Designer: Tamarack Homes
Location: Greenbank Road
Building: Townhomes, semi-detached and singles
Size: 1,328 square feet to 3,570 square feet
Pricing: Starting at $341,900
Model: Two to three bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms
Status: Now selling
Occupancy: Fall 2017
Sales centre: 507 Egret Way
Phone: 613-692-0500
Website: tamarackhomes.com

DESIGN

Make it a time-capsule holiday theme

Glen Peloso
For Torstar News Service

Holiday decor and accessories enjoy greater longevity when carried out with a plan. Avoiding the Christmas-exploded-in-here look is key, and decorating with a theme in a streamlined way is a straight-forward approach to achieving that. So how about the retro-inspired, vintage-vibe theme this season? Here are a few ways to do it:

Tree lights and ornaments

The focal point of most people's home decor is the Christmas tree. Original vintage bulbs came with metallic reflectors to disperse light and add a little sparkle.

Fast forward 60 years and the industry has come a long way with more safe and energy-efficient options, many of which are available this season with that hipster retro look at retailers such as Lowe's and Canadian Tire. Layer in light with strands of twinkle lights for depth and consider adding a collection of original or reproduction glass vintage ornaments, which can be found now at almost all retailers in the Christmas spirit.

Wrap it up

To keep with the theme, add mid-century detail to the wrapped gifts under your retro tree for a creatively cohesive look this season. I personally love this look from HomeSense, with the wonderful wrap, ribbon and tags that bring to life a sense of being revived from a time capsule.

Wrapped gifts make for great decor throughout the holidays.

Accessories

Part of the joy of season is the delight in finding and using beautiful elements of holiday decor.

Traditional choices, such as evergreen boughs, mistletoe, poinsettia and seasonally scented candles are always favourites. Adding playful and practical elements, such as a vintage radio-snow globe — spied at The Bay recently — or a vintage record player,

Glen Peloso is principal designer of Peloso Alexander Interiors. Contact him at pelosoalexander.com.

Vintage wrapping paper and labels are a great look this holiday season. HANDOUT

Top kitchen trends for 2017

IDEAS

Black and white, mix and match will blow up

Americans briefly scaled back the scope of home renovation projects after the recession began nearly a decade ago, says interior designer and HGTV Design Star judge Vern Yip. But even during the peak of that focus on smaller, more sustainable living, the size and complexity of kitchen designs continued to grow.

"The kitchen is the heart of the home," Yip says, and people see it as a good place to spend money and recoup the investment when they sell their home.

What's trending in kitchen design as 2017 approaches? We've asked Yip and two other interior design experts — Caleb Anderson, co-founder of the New York-based design firm Drake/Anderson, and Brian Patrick Flynn, interior designer for HGTV's Urban Oasis 2016 home giveaway — to share their favourite innovations and thoughts on which trending design choices will stand the test of time.

A Florida kitchen designed by Vern Yip. After several years of focus on gold and other yellow-hued metals, Yip says hardware finished in "silver metals" like pewter, nickel and chrome and designed in geometric shapes are now trending in kitchen hardware. VERN YIP VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Think black and white

Black and white are the trendiest colours now for kitchen design, and Flynn points out that they're also timeless.

A black and white palette works with virtually any accent colour, he says, so "if you go black and white, you really only have to spend once."

Right now, "black appliances with more of a matte finish" are among Flynn's favourites.

Yip says cabinets in both black and white are popular, and look great mixed together.

That's another trend all three designers are seeing: upper and lower cabinets done in different finishes and materials. Anderson recently designed a kitchen in London that has upper cabinets made of metal and glass, with lower cabinets made of cerused wood. "They need to complement each other," he says, "but everything doesn't have to match."

Get creative

Anderson also notes that it's popular to design a kitchen island out of different materials than the cabinets and countertops. That puts a personal stamp on the room, especially if you make your island out of a distinctive piece of furniture, like a vintage cabinet.

By using popular materials in unique ways, you can design a kitchen that feels current but won't look dated as trends change. Flynn is fan of that approach: For HGTV's Urban Oasis giveaway house this year, he chose a reflective, black marble mosaic tile for the kitchen walls, from the counter all the way up to the ceiling. The look is on-trend, but has a classic beauty that won't need renovating in a few years.

> **The hardware in your kitchen is sort of like the jewelry.**
> Vern Yip

He also used concrete for the countertops, a popular option now but one with a classic simplicity. Along with concrete, Anderson and Yip says quartz countertops are popular.

Quartz is more durable than marble, which can easily stain, and more consistent in colour throughout a large slab.

Textured and coloured glass is another way to jump on a trend in ways that reflect your own style, Anderson says. He's seeing glass used to surround the hoods above stoves, for backsplashes, and as cabinet fronts.

Mix your metals

Gold, brass and other yellow-toned metal finishes have been popular for several years, says Yip, and now white metal finishes like chrome, pewter and stainless steel are catching on too.

Anderson recently used a mix of black and steel finishes in one kitchen, along with brass.

All three designers suggest going with your favourites and feeling free to mix and match.

"The hardware in your kitchen is sort of like the jewelry," and you can have fun adding that bit of bling, Yip says. Changing your hardware is a nice way to update the kitchen without having to change the cabinets.

You can also bring in a light fixture with a metal that's different from your cabinet hardware. Yip is seeing many clients opting to splurge on dramatic lighting in the kitchen, rather than in the dining room.

"The old way of thinking is you spend thousands of dollars on the crystal chandelier over the dining table, but lighting over the kitchen was practical," he says. Now, there's more emphasis on kitchen lighting "that doesn't feel functional but has a really polished esthetic quality."

Tech isn't an afterthought

Flynn used a WiFi-enabled oven (easily controlled from a smartphone) in the Urban Oasis house, as well as a refrigerator equipped with cameras accessible from a digital app, so you can see what you have inside it.

"While you are out, you can decide on the fly what to buy and bring home to be stocked up for dinner," he says.

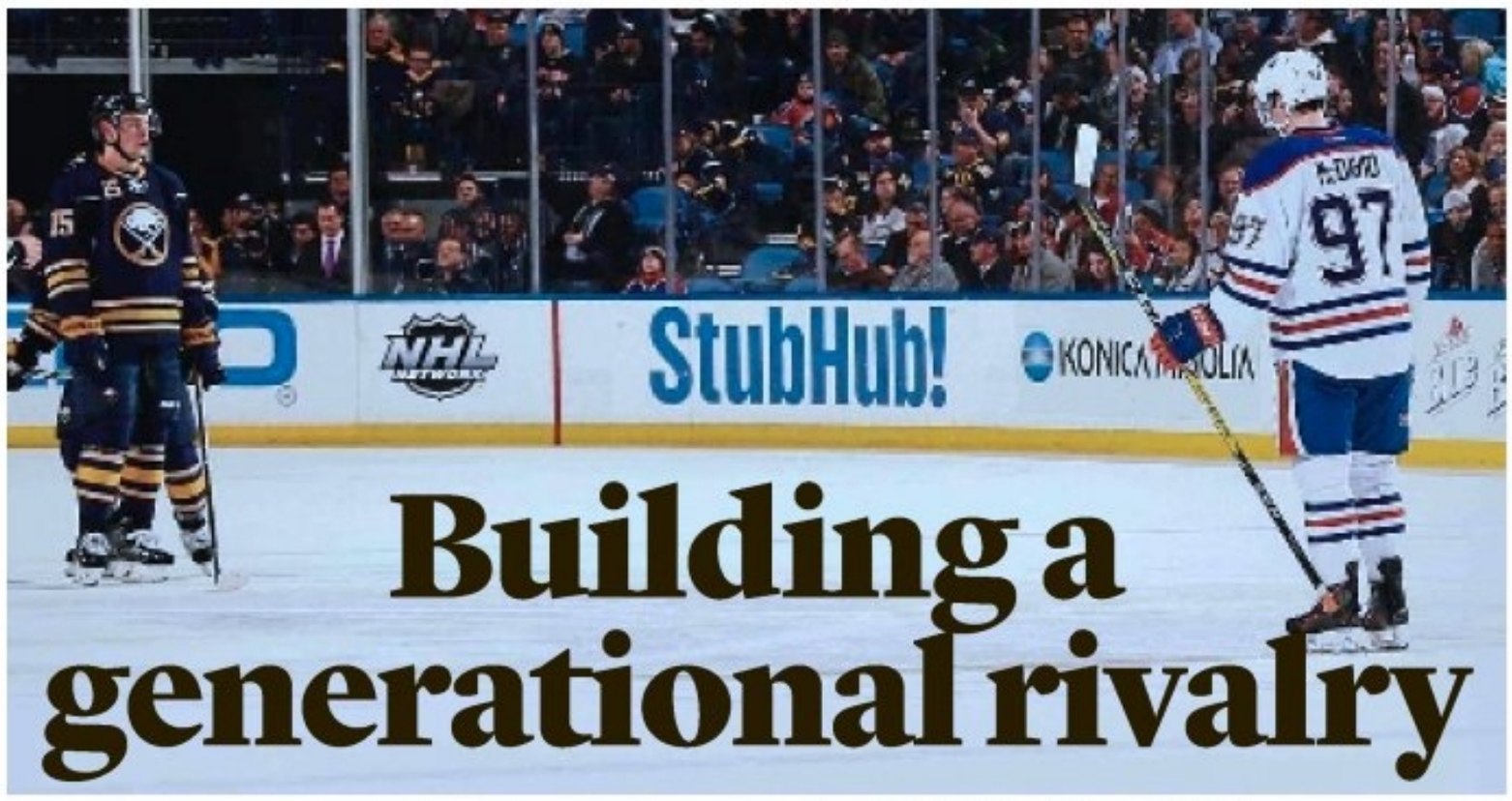
Smaller appliances are a priority for many homeowners. "People tend to clutter their countertops with small appliances or put them in the cabinet and have to pull them out," Anderson says. So designers now routinely figure in storage space where small appliances can be concealed but easily accessed.

Also, says Anderson, "Clients have so many devices, smart devices," that they need "an area in the kitchen that's devoted to USB ports and chargers."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

metro SPORTS

A new NBA labour deal was reportedly on the verge of being finalized after owners voted Wednesday to approve a proposed seven-year CBA



Building a generational rivalry

Jack Eichel, left, and Connor McDavid JEN FULLER/GETTY IMAGES

NHL

McDavid leads the way in next marquee matchup

No matter where the Edmonton Oilers travel, captain Connor McDavid is confronted by the same questions and comparisons to the opposing team's star.

In Buffalo, it's Jack Eichel, who was selected second in the 2015 draft behind McDavid. In Toronto, it's Auston Matthews, the No. 1 pick last June.

In Pittsburgh, it's Sidney Crosby, the obvious measuring stick for the NHL's entire "Next Generation" crop of youngsters.

Intriguing as the discussions are, McDavid would prefer not to be involved.

"I think it can be a bit of a sideshow sometimes," the NHL's points leader said during a recent stop in Buffalo, where his budding rivalry with Eichel was broached. "It seems like there's a new guy everywhere we go."

The same applies to Oilers coach Todd McLellan, who enjoyed a firsthand glimpse of the league's top young stars while coaching the 23-and-under Team North America at the World Cup of Hockey in September.

"You'd like to capture that and reproduce it during the winter, but that's really, really hard to do with 82 games and 30 teams," McLellan said. "But for us, I get asked those questions night after night after night."

2006

The last time the Oilers qualified for the playoffs.

McLellan would rather place the focus on his entire squad and not just McDavid, who at 19 has enough weight on his shoulders.

"Ryan Nugent-Hopkins is a former first overall pick, Leon Draisaitl: these players have to not take a backseat," McLellan said. "They have to step up and lead as well. And Connor can't do it by himself every night."

Team versus individual aside, the comparisons won't stop any time soon. And in years to come, the buzz will increase particularly once the torch of the NHL's marquee matchup, which used to be Wayne Gretzky versus Mario Lemieux, is passed on from Crosby versus Alex Ovechkin.

NBC broadcaster Pierre McGuire is intrigued by the many possibilities, all of which involve McDavid, whom he already regards as the league's second-best player behind Crosby.

Aside from Eichel and Matthews, McGuire points to the Winnipeg Jets' young tandem of Mark Scheifele and Patrik Laine as natural rivals to McDavid. Unlike Toronto and Buffalo, who play in the Eastern Conference and meet Edmonton just twice a season, the Jets play in the West.

The prospect of seeing the Canadian-born McDavid facing off against the U.S.-born Eichel led McGuire to lobby the NHL to continue playing on the international stage.

"That's why we have to go to the Olympics, for this to flesh out," he said. "That's what creates a lot of these gigantic rivalries." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Second most points is 'like No. 1' to Jagr

Jaromir Jagr knows No. 2 is as high as he'll go on the NHL career scoring list.

In his mind, that's a record in itself.

Jagr's next point will be the 1,888th of his career and give him outright possession of second place on the all-time NHL points list, breaking a tie with Mark Messier. Only Wayne Gretzky's total of 2,857 is better than that, and Jagr — the 44-year-old Florida Panthers forward who has said he can see himself playing until he's 50 — knows the top spot is going to stay far from his reach.

"For me, it's like No. 1," Jagr said recently when asked what passing Messier would mean. "I don't really count Wayne Gretzky. He was from another planet. I don't think he was from this planet. Whatever he did, it's unbreakable."

> **I just enjoy every moment I get a chance to play in this league and try to do everything I can to stay in this league.**
> Jaromir Jagr

Jagr caught Messier on Tuesday with a three-assist effort in Florida's shootout win over Buffalo. His next chance for the tiebreaker is Thursday, when the Panthers play host to the Boston Bruins. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLB

Slugger taken aback by Jays quick trigger

Edwin Encarnacion might have been signed to a new contract with the Blue Jays by now, had it not been for a compressed signing period that gave the popular slugger no time to consider his market, his agent says.

Paul Kinzer, who is representing Encarnacion in what is now a sluggish free agent market for power hitters, said Encarnacion was taken by surprise when Toronto signed Kendrys Morales "two days" after they offered him a reported four-year, $80-million deal.

Edwin Encarnacion GETTY IMAGES

"They told us they'd be signing other players, that wasn't a surprise to us," Kinzer told the Jeff Blair Show on Sportsnet radio Wednesday morning.

"But signing someone (Morales) two days later, that was a surprise."

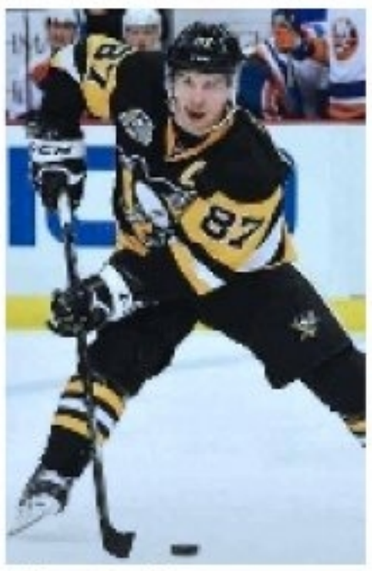
Encarnacion remains unsigned, though Kinzer said his client has at least six offers to consider. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Streaking

The Columbus Blue Jackets set a franchise record by winning their 10th straight with a 3-2 shootout victory over the Kings on Tuesday. They also have points in 12 consecutive games, going 11-0-1, one short of matching a franchise-best 12-0-1 run to close the 2014-15 season.

Slumping

The New York Islanders power play has converted a league-worst 12 of 88 chances and has yet to score more than twice in one game. It's not as if the power play is contributing to wins. The Isles are 4-4-4 when scoring with the main advantage.



Sidney Crosby GETTY IMAGES

League leaders

22

Goals: Sidney Crosby, PIT

Points: Connor McDavid, EDM, 40

Game-winning goals: Artem Anisimov, CHI, and Jeff Carter, LA, 6

Ice time per game: Dustin Byfuglien, WIN, 27:36

Wins: Sergei Bobrovsky, CBJ, 19.

IN BRIEF

Bum thumb pushes Cavs' Smith out of action

Cavaliers starting guard J.R. Smith will be out indefinitely with a broken right thumb, an injury that will test the depth of the defending NBA champions.

Smith got hurt late in the second quarter of Tuesday night's game in Milwaukee and didn't return after halftime in a game the Cavs won 114-108 in overtime.

The team did not say when Smith will have surgery. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canadian ski cross racers

Germany's Heidi Zacher won gold Wednesday at the ski cross World Cup while Canadians Marielle Thompson and Georgia Simmerling joined her on the podium in Innichen, Italy.

Simmerling, from West Vancouver, B.C., had the lead for most of the big final before slipping to third. Thompson, from Whistler, B.C., took the silver to retain her lead in the season standings. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Comforting Slow Cooker Chicken Stew

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Just a bit of prep in the morning and you'll come home to a satisfying dinner.

Ready in 6 hours 10 minutes
Prep time: 10 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 6 chicken thighs
- 1 potato, peeled and cubed
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 Tbsp fresh thyme (1 tsp dried)
- 1 or 2 bay leaves
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 cup fresh or frozen peas
- 1/2 cup light cream

Directions

1. In a Dutch oven or high-sided skillet, sauté onions, celery and carrots in splash of vegetable oil for about five minutes.

2. Add flour, thyme and bay leaves and stir for a minute. Add stock and stir until smooth. Simmer for 3 or 4 minutes until sauce thickens.

3. Add the potatoes and good pinch of salt and pepper.

4. Place chicken thighs in the bottom of slow cooker and spoon the vegetable mixture over. Seal and set for 6 hours.

5. Add peas and cream and cook for 10 more minutes. Serve plain or over mashed potatoes.

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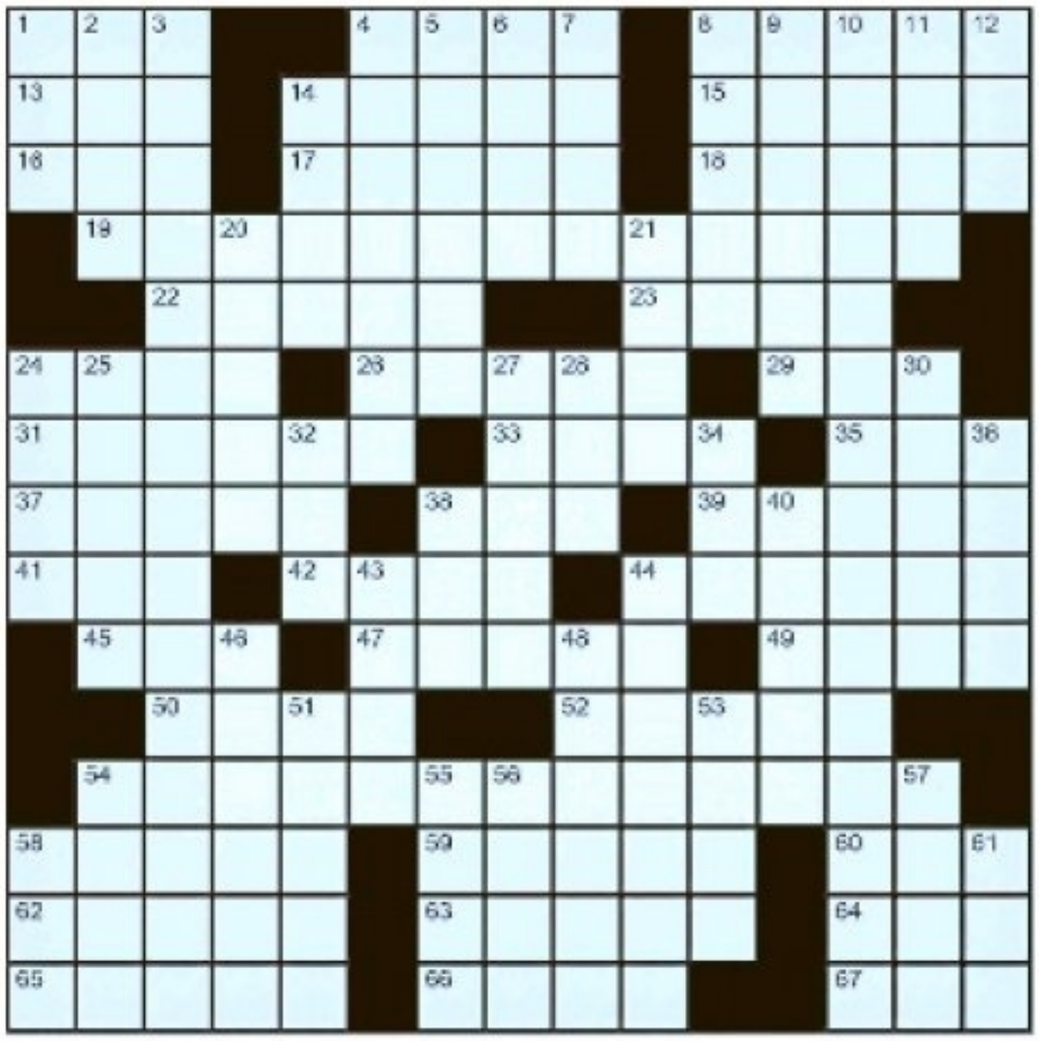
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Australian boot maker
4. Snowplow's creation
8. Cosmetics brand
13. For
14. Angels and Earthly Creatures writer, Elinor _
15. Jeweller's eye piece
16. Lawn roll
17. Chicago's airport
18. The _ (Poem by British poet William Blake)
19. Signs indicating that Santa and his delivery crew have just landed: 3 wds.
22. _ havoc
23. Nobel Peace Prize city
24. Money Object link: 2 wds.
26. French painter Mr. Dufy
29. Sotheby's fare
31. Liveliness
33. Mr. Kilmer's
35. Drummer Mr. Cool
37. Until this moment: 2 wds.
38. Tommy Jones connector
39. Laughs
41. Note before Lah
42. Air freshener target, variantly
44. Toronto college; or, Roman statesman
45. Never: German
47. On a ship, _ _ sea
49. Nero's 602
50. Coin insertion place
52. Canadian sweets shop, _ Secord
54. Bit of "We Three Kings of Orient Are": "Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying / Sealed in the _-_ _..."
58. Unflappable
59. Take apart shoelaces
60. Antiquity
62. _ _'oeuvre (Appetizer)
63. Self-righteous
64. Mr. Orbison
65. Showbiz performer Martha's
66. Canadian director Mr. Egoyan
67. _-inspiring

DOWN
1. Sit-_ (Exercises)
2. David of "Rhoda"
3. What it's predicted Rudolph will do at the end of his Christmas tune: 4 wds.
4. How to completely memorize something: 2 wds.
5. Sarah Palin's state
6. De _, Robert
7. Ardent
8. Some choral voices
9. One of Montreal's Concordia University campuses
10. Have fun with photos posing: 4 wds.
11. Imitates
12. "_ darn tootin'!"
14. Created tapestries
20. Storm aka _ Munroe, Halle Berry's character in "X-Men: Days of Future Past" (2014)
21. Bun
24. 'Violin' suffixes
25. Serving _ (Dinnertime utensil)
27. Obvious
28. Dubai's locale, commonly
30. Ms. Bingham of "Baywatch"
32. "Letters from _ Jima" (2006)
34. Particular pronoun
36. Mr. Morales
38. Mr. Ferrigno
40. Prefix meaning 'Male'
43. Fawn
44. The Olympic _, in Montreal
46. Author S.E. Hinton = Susan _ Hinton
48. The Beatles' 'Yellow Submarine' album tune: "It's _ _ Much"
51. Where musicians store their songs: 2 wds.
53. Driving 4x4s, commonly
54. Ancient colonnade
55. Lipton _-_-soup
56. Kool & The Gang's "Get Down _ _"
57. Gust
58. Stock unit [abbr.]
61. Hair tinter

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
This is a wonderful day to enjoy the company of others, especially partners and close friends. You also will enjoy dealing with members of the general public.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Work-related travel is likely today. Fortunately, you feel upbeat and happy, especially relating to co-workers and customers. People will be honest and candid with you today.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
This is a fun-loving day! You will enjoy social outings, sports events and playful activities with children. Seek out opportunities to express your creative talents.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Family conversations will go well today, especially with female relatives, moms and aunts. Explore real-estate opportunities; however, wait until tomorrow to act with purpose.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Today you feel quite content with your world. This is why you will enjoy chatting with siblings, neighbors and relatives. It feels good to be upbeat and optimistic.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This is an excellent day for business and commerce. Travelling for work is very likely. Nevertheless, postpone important financial decisions until tomorrow.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Today it's easy to feel sympathetic and generous to others. In part, this is because you feel fortunate, but you also have a concern for the welfare of those who are less fortunate.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You feel content today, which is why you are happy to work behind the scenes. Your busy pace lately has been a bit exhausting, and you know it!

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
A conversation with a friend or a member of a group might encourage you to be more ambitious about your future goals. Consider these today; however, wait until tomorrow to finalize anything.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
People notice you today. They might even learn information about you. Just be aware of this in case you want to guard your privacy. Be aware of your reputation.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Do something different today, because you are upbeat and eager to explore new situations. In particular, you want to learn something new that interests you. Travel if you can.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
In many ways, you will benefit from others today. Someone might do you a favor or make a promise. Wait to find out if this promise will ring true.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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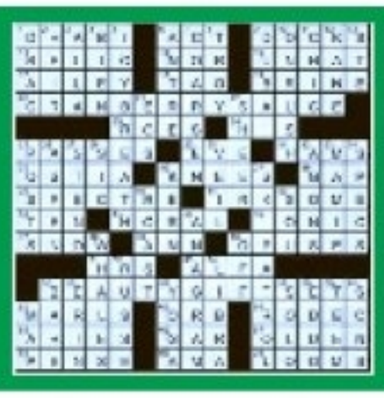

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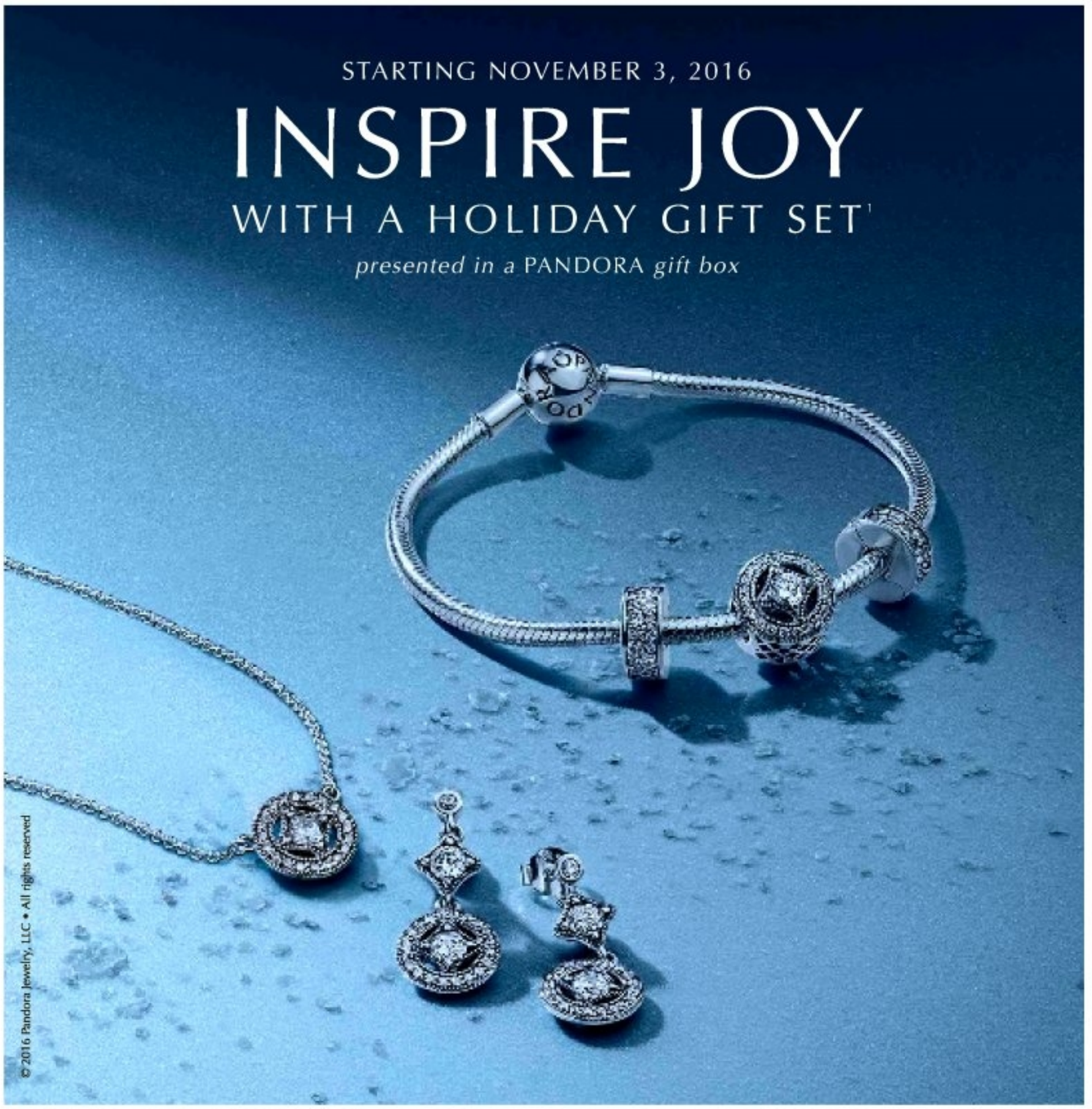

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